Tower District

SPECIFIC PLAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

A Joint Project of the Tower District Design Review Committee and the Tower District Specific Plan Implementation Committee, Fall, 2004

PREAMBLE
LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS

The City Council acknowledges and reaffirms the following fundamental concepts of the Tower District Specific Plan:

1) The purpose of the Tower District Specific Plan is to provide the City and the residents of the district with a comprehensive structure for managing historic resources and neighborhoods in the face of future change and development. The Plan is intended to address urban conservation and new development, with a framework of goals and policies for neighborhood quality and stability, for economic development and reinvestment, and for fiscal responsibility.[1]

2) Both individually and collectively, the buildings, objects and places of the Tower District create a distinctive neighborhood identity. The Tower District remains an eminently liveable area of the City.[2]

3) Change is a natural part of the aging process of a neighborhood. However, change which results in a loss of essential character-defining elements can greatly diminish if not destroy the value and meaning of a place. Different generations of residents will leave their individual marks on the houses and businesses of the Tower District. Individual design decisions for alterations, additions and new construction need to be looked at by the City to insure that they are consistent with appropriate guidelines. The intent is to insure that the physical integrity of the Tower district will be maintained. Without the adoption and use of design guidelines, the historic character of the Tower District will eventually be lost.[3]

The City Council finds that adoption and application of these Design Guidelines are necessary to insure full implementation of the Tower District Specific Plan, and to protect the physical integrity and historic character of the Tower District Specific Plan Area, the Area's property values, and its economic vitality.

[1] Tower District Specific Plan, Introduction, 1.1 Purpose (p. 1-1).
[2] Tower District Specific Plan, 1.4 Plan Summary, Physical Setting (p. 1-3).
[3] Tower District Specific Plan, Goal II, Objective 1, Policy 4 (p. 2-3).

Table of Contents

IV. Medium Density Residential Guidelines

V. Low Density Residential Guidelines

I. Introduction

The Tower District is a special place within the City of Fresno, whose long history and distinctive architecture make it unique. However, the Tower District is not a museum exhibit preserved in amber, nor should it be. It is a dynamic, living neighborhood where new growth and development are welcome. However, since the Tower District is a special place, “any old thing” will not do. While we have no intention of freezing the neighborhood in time, we also have no intention of allowing it to be degraded. We want growth, and we welcome evolution—but we demand excellence and insist that the neighborhood maintain its distinctiveness. In the end, all neighborhood residents will benefit from properly designed growth. Never in the history of mankind has a neighborhood suffered from being too beautiful. With that in mind, we have established these guidelines.

A. History of the Tower District

The Tower District began to develop in the early part of the 20th century as one of Fresno's first suburbs. When the Fresno Traction Company’s streetcars extended into the area, a unique blending of apartment houses, small bungalows, and large homes evolved. As property values rose, the neighborhood became denser and more diverse. Neighborhood “main street” commercial areas evolved in a few areas, such as Weldon and Echo Avenues near Fresno High School, Van Ness Village at Van Ness and Floradora Avenues, Fulton Avenue south of Olive, and most significantly, along Olive Avenue.

During the decades after World War II, conventions in development and neighborhood design changed dramatically. Emphasis shifted from the streetcar and the pedestrian to the automobile. Several insensitive buildings invaded the Tower District area during this era and damaged its original character. However, the neighborhood emerged from this era in much better shape than other inner-city neighborhoods in Fresno. Although it had suffered some poor development and neglect of older structures, its urban fabric remained mostly intact.

In the late 1980s, the citizenry of the Tower District became very active in protecting the future of their neighborhood. This began with the opposition to an inappropriate building proposed for the area, which led

to the development of the Tower District Specific Plan, adopted in 1991. The strong activism of neighborhood residents continues to this day.

In the 1990s America experienced an urban renaissance. Downtowns in many cities gained population for the first time since the 1940s; people began to value traditional architecture and walkable neighborhood design again; and the "New Urbanism" movement, which advocated a return to traditional town planning, swept the city planning profession. Old, neglected neighborhoods became "hip" again, and the Tower District was no different. As people began to crave an environment that was more interesting than modern subdivisions and strip malls, the Tower District was well-positioned to provide an alternative. Shops and restaurants in the area began to thrive, and homes and apartment houses began to receive facelifts. The area began to host city-wide special events, and blossomed into the cultural center of the entire metropolitan area.

B. The Vision for the Tower District

The vision for the future of the Tower District is twofold. First, the historic character of the neighborhood must be retained. For decades, pressures have been mounting to destroy historic structures, widen roads, and convert the area into something that resembles a contemporary suburb. This is not acceptable. Second, the residents of the Tower District envision it growing and evolving, just as it did during its first 40 years of existence, into an area that has even more vitality, more streetlife, more goods and services, more pleasurable public spaces, and more beautiful architecture.

Most importantly, the Tower District has always been—and should continue to be—a little different from the rest of Fresno.

C. Area of Applicability

These guidelines should apply to the Tower District Specific Plan Area, shown on Page 8. The map is color coded to show how the neighborhood is divided into the three areas described in this document.

D. The Purpose of These Guidelines

1. To assist developers by clearly describing what is expected of projects in the Tower District Specific Plan Area, thus minimizing delay and uncertainty for them. Following these guidelines will ensure that developers follow “the path of least resistance” in pursuing projects in the Tower District Specific Plan Area.

2. To assist the Tower District Specific Plan Implementation Committee by guiding development in the commercial core until the update of the City’s zoning ordinance is complete, ensuring that new projects enhance the established character of the area and increase its viability according to the principles established in the Tower District Specific Plan.

3. To assist the Tower District Design Review Committee by making it clear to developers and property owners what is expected of them from new development and the remodeling of existing buildings.

4. To assist the Development Department of the City of Fresno by outlining requirements for projects and minimizing conflicts with established plans until the revision of the zoning ordinance can be completed.

5. As used in these Guidelines, the term "should" means the Design Guidelines must be followed unless compelling and overriding reasons are found to allow deviations. Implementation of the Design Guidelines should not compromise the integrity, or undermine or conflict with the goals, objectives or policies of the Tower District Specific Plan.

E. How to Use These Guidelines

The guidelines in this document come from a variety of sources. Some are taken straight from the City’s zoning ordinance and are backed by the City’s police power. Others will be included in the comprehensive update of the zoning ordinance, scheduled for completion by 2005. Other recommendations in this document reflect policies of the Fresno General Plan or the Tower District Specific Plan. Taken all together, and followed

diligently, the guidelines presented here represent the “path of least resistance” for project approval in the Tower District Specific Plan area.

It may not be necessary to read this document from cover-to-cover in order to understand what is expected of your project. Only the guidelines that pertain to the details of your project are applicable. For example, if you are replacing windows on a single-family house, there is no need to read the guidelines on street, block, or lot layouts, nor would it be necessary to follow commercial/mixed-use guidelines. Your requirements will all be listed in “Section V: Low Density Residential,” under the windows sub-section.

Design Review Committee Process & Submittal Requirements

The Tower District Design Review Committee (DRC) is comprised of seven volunteer members, all appointed by the City Council members presiding over the District or by the Mayor.

The purpose of the DRC is to ensure that neighborhood improvements, from window replacement to new construction to street modifications, maintain or enhance the unique character of the Tower District.

The DRC meets once a week to review all proposals requiring a permit that fall within the boundaries of the Tower District, as defined by the map on Page 8. Review and recommendation from the DRC are necessary before the City can issue building permits for projects within the Tower District. Subject to agreement between the committee and City planning staff, staff can approve a permit without DRC review if the project is clearly in conformance with these Guidelines.

An applicant may appeal the DRC’s recommendation to the City of Fresno Development Director. The DRC may submit its recommendation in writing to the Development Director, the Planning Commission or the City Council as it deems appropriate. If the DRC makes a recommendation in any respect inconsistent with these Guidelines, it should make written findings of compelling overriding considerations justifying such recommendation.

In the event of an appeal to the Development Director, the applicant and the Director should appear jointly before the DRC, and the applicant and

the DRC should present their respective positions to the Director at that meeting. Neither the applicant nor the DRC may otherwise discuss the dispute with the Director. The Director should return to the next regularly scheduled DRC meeting to announce his or her decision. The Director may make a determination overriding the recommendation of the DRC, and/or inconsistent with these Guidelines, only if such determination is accompanied by written findings of compelling overriding considerations justifying the determination.

Decisions of the Development Director as to the issuance of a Construction Plan Check, Building Permit, Demolition Permit and other ministerial acts are final, and no further administrative remedy is available.

An applicant, the DRC, or any interested person may appeal decisions as to entitlement applications, including Plan Amendments, Rezonings, Site Plan Reviews, Conditional Use Permits, Variances, Land Divisions, and other discretionary acts, to the Planning Commission or the City Council as permitted by ordinances of the City of Fresno.

For renovations of and additions to existing structures, every attempt should be made to keep the historic appearance of the building. When you consider remodeling, you must maintain the original style and character of the building. You must use the original materials, architectural detailing and colors in your renovation or addition. In short, renovations and additions should blend in, not stand out.

Some sites within the Tower District are classified as “Historic Sites.” Major renovations or design-altering changes to the historic nature of these sites will not be permitted. Anyone who plans to modify buildings in these historic sites must have the review of both the DRC and the City of Fresno Historic Preservation Officer.

We highly recommend that you discuss any project with the DRC before you pay to have professional plans drawn. This will save you both time and money.

When you attend a DRC meeting for their formal recommendation, you should bring a site plan detailing the proposal, building elevations, and photographs of the original building. If it is appropriate to the project, the

DRC may also require parking plans, landscape plans, lighting plans and proposed on-site signage plans. Appendix A contains an example of a project that met DRC submittal requirements.

If you are proposing specific changes to a building, you should bring samples of the material(s) you wish to use—siding, shingles, and so on.

Applicants may be required to modify their proposed plans and resubmit to the DRC for review and recommendation.

F. General Neighborhood Structure

Even though most developers and property owners will not work in all areas of the neighborhood, it is helpful to understand the context in which your particular activities take place. Below is a brief description of how traditional neighborhoods like the Tower District are structured.

Traditional neighborhoods like the neighborhoods of the Tower District are typically based on a 5- to 10-minute walk from the edge to the center. The center of this area is mixed-use in nature, with commercial uses and often a high density of residential uses, too. Densities decrease toward the edge of the neighborhood. In the era that these neighborhoods evolved, people had to be able to walk to employment, shopping, services, and transit stops.

In the current era this pedestrian-scaled pattern has been abandoned for a larger automobile-scaled form. While inexpensive gasoline and mass auto ownership have made this possible, many people still prefer the pedestrian-scaled neighborhood, which is one of the traits that makes the Tower District special. This characteristic should be maintained.

This document is organized according to the three main zones of building types in the Tower District, which are called—for the purposes of this document—the commercial/mixed-use neighborhood core, the medium-high density residential area, and the medium density residential area.

1. Commercial/Mixed-Use Area

The center of the neighborhood is the commercial/mixed-use core, or "Main Street" area. This area is known primarily for retail storefronts, although other uses, such as apartments and offices, are prominent, too. Densities are usually high, often 20 to 50 units per net acre. There are usually no front or side setbacks, with structures built right up to the sidewalk, standing shoulder-to-shoulder with their neighbors and forming a solid street wall. Buildings face the street rather than parking lots.

Commercial/Mixed-Use Area

2. Medium-High Density Residential Areas

Outside of the Main Street area one typically finds moderately high-density residential uses, especially along major streets. This zone is dominated by apartment houses, although other uses, such as rowhouses and some small-scale commercial uses, may exist. Densities are usually in the range of 15 to 30 units per net acre, and front setbacks are minimal, usually a maximum of 10 feet.

Medium-High Density Residential Area

3. Medium Density Residential Areas

The outer areas of the neighborhood are usually dominated by single-family detached homes. However, some lots may also have auxiliary dwellings (also known as "granny flats") or duplexes, and corner lots sometimes have small apartment houses, with a maximum of 4 units. Densities are low, usually 3 to 15 units per acre. Front setbacks are more generous, often 20 to 30 feet, although they sometimes are as shallow as 5 feet.

Medium Density Residential Area

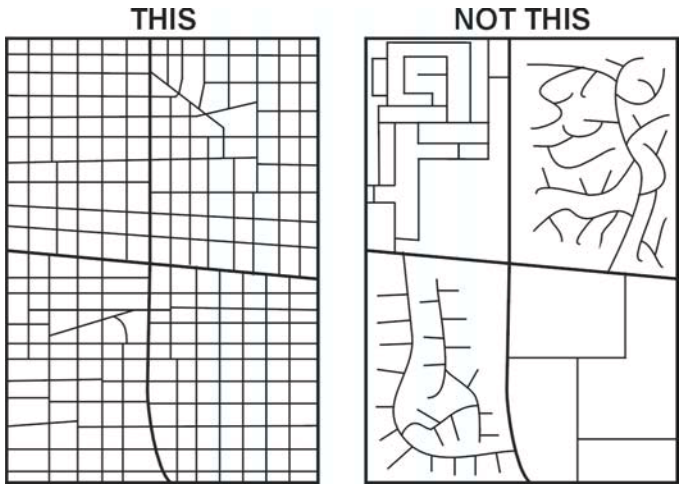
TOWER DISTRICT SPECIFIC PLAN AREA
Design Guidelines
Guidelines Areas
Commercial/Mixed Use
Medium Density Residential
Medium Density Residential with Limited Commercial Uses
Low density Residential
Other Areas
Open Space
Public Facilities
Industrial
Conversion Key
Design Guidelines
Specific Plan
Commercial/Mixed Use
General Office
Neighborhood Commercial
Neighborhood Commercial, Mixed Use
Medium High Density Residential
Residential, Medium High Density
Residential, Medium High Density Tolerant Area
Residential, High Density
Residential, High Density Professional Offices
Medium Density Residential
Residential, Medium Density
SHIELDS
SIMPSON
CORNELL
MICHIGAN
PRINCETON
BROWN
HARVARD
TERRACE
CLINTON
YASSAR
YALE
CAMBRIDGE
WELDON
NORMAL
UNIVERSITY
PERALTA
McKINLEY
CARMEN
HOME
PINE
NORMANDIE
FLORADORA
THOMAS
BREMER
DUDLEY
ELIZABETH
DENNETT
ALHAMBRA
OLIVE
FERN
HEDGES
WEBER
BELMONT
FRANKLIN
UNION PACIFIC RR
STATE ROUTE 180
FRUIT
VAGEDES
ARTHUR
ADDLINE
THORNE
FARRIS
HARRISON
SAFFORD
PALM
WILSON
VAN NESS
LINDEN
WISHON
MAROA
COLLEGE
DEL MAR
GLENN
CALAVERAS
JACKSTONE
PALM
FERGER
ROOSEVELT
ECHO
BROADWAY
LUCERNE
YOSEMITE
FULTON
VAN NESS
COLLEGE
POPLAR
PARK
SAN PABLO
GLENN
BLACKSTONE
0
500'
1000'
1500'

II. General Neighborhood Structure Guidelines

While the basic structure of streets, blocks, and lots is already in place in the Tower District, it is still useful to discuss it briefly. Certain situations may arise where this basic physical structure can be altered. Whether such a change is considered positive or negative should be based on the guidelines below:

A. Street Network

The street network is one of the most critical components of urbanism. It determines not only how a neighborhood looks on a map, but also how cars circulate, whether or not people can walk, and how land is developed. In pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods like the Tower District, an interconnected street grid with short blocks is crucial to the area's ability to function.



Street Network. *Traditional neighborhood street patterns vs. conventional suburban street patterns*

1. Street Interconnectivity

- Streets should form an interconnected network.
- Cul-de-sacs are inappropriate except when a freeway, railroad, or canal prevents connectivity.

2. Block Lengths

- Block lengths should be short, averaging 200' to 300' feet.
- Maximum block length should be 500'.
- When new development is proposed on blocks longer than 500 feet in length, new streets should be created to break up these oversized blocks, if possible.

3. Alleys

- Mixed-use "Main Streets" and commercial areas should have mid-block alleys running parallel to them. This prevents curb cuts from intruding into the sidewalk (endangering pedestrians) and allows parking lots to be in the back of buildings.

- Alleys are also desirable in residential areas, though they aren't as critical as in mixed-use and commercial areas.

- Redevelopment of blocks where alleys are missing should incorporate new alleys whenever possible.

B. Lot Layout

Lots in traditional neighborhoods like the Tower District were small by modern suburban standards. Only later did lot sizes in the commercial areas dramatically increase. Future development should return to the small lot pattern of the past whenever possible in order to retain the neighborhood's diversity and pedestrian scale.

- Single-Family House lots should generally range from 4,000 square feet to 12,500 square feet.

- Apartment houses lots should generally range from 6,000 square feet to 20,000 square feet.

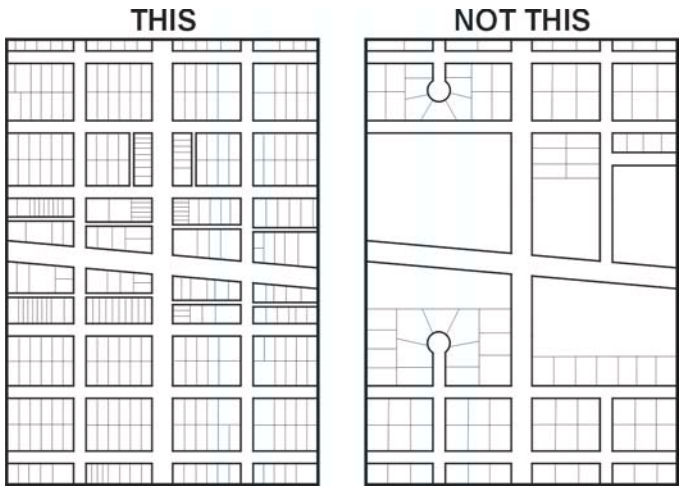
- Commercial/mixed-use lots should generally range from 6,000 square feet to 40,000 square feet.

- Lot width should be less than the lot depth.

- Each lot must front on at least 1 public street, but lots should not run through the entire block, fronting on 2 parallel streets. Rather, lots should extend to mid-block, backing onto another lot or an alley.

- No lot should be so large as to occupy its whole block, and no lot should ever be formed by vacating a street and forming an oversized block.

- Historic features that define the Tower District, including, but not limited to, streetlights and median islands, should be maintained and protected.



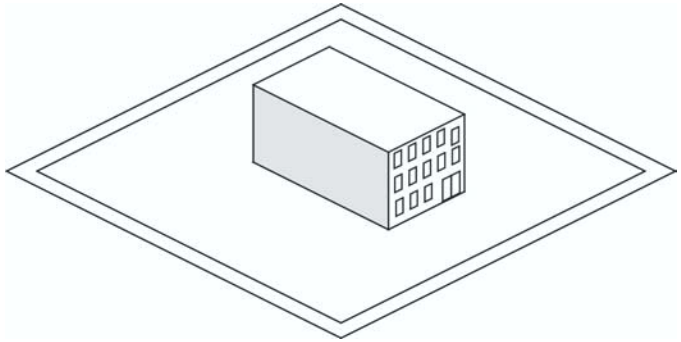
Block and Lot Patterns. *Shown on the left is a traditional neighborhood block and lot layout. Shown on the right is a "suburbanized" traditional neighborhood. This should not be allowed in the Tower District. New development should reintroduce the traditional pattern where it has been distorted by insensitive development.*

C. Building Arrangement

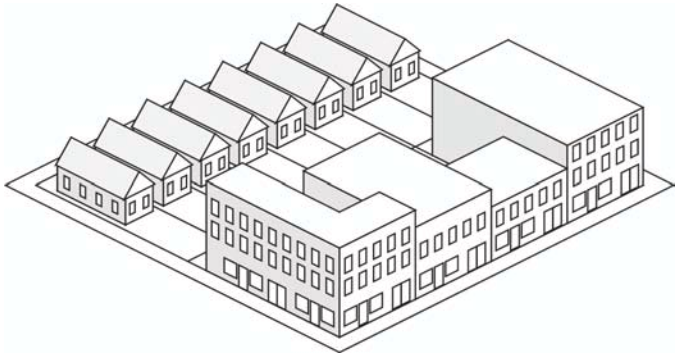
Specific guidelines for setbacks and other aspects of building arrangement are described in subsequent sections of this document and will vary by zone, but in general the following principles apply:

- Buildings should be located toward the front of the lot, with private open space—such as yards and parking—in the rear of the lot.
- Buildings should present active fronts to public streets. Features such as entrances, windows, and balconies should be oriented to the street to keep it monitored, lively and safe.
- There should be a clear separation between the public and private realms. Spaces should either be in public view and under surveillance, or private and protected.

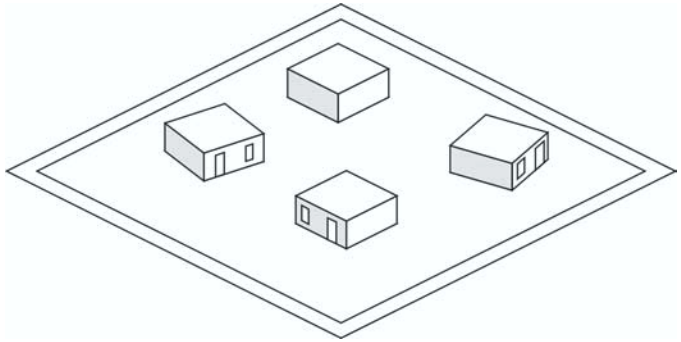
NOT THIS



THIS



NOT THIS



D. Street Design

While the Tower District has an established street pattern, there are still instances where modifications to streets are proposed. There also may be instances in the future where new streets are created. When streets are being added, removed, or modified, the following guidelines should be followed:

1. Roadways

- Roadways in traditional neighborhoods are typically narrower than their suburban counterparts. This slows traffic, increases walkability, and creates spatial definition. Existing streets should not be widened, and new streets should be made as narrow as possible.

- The interconnected grid street pattern found in traditional neighborhoods disperses traffic and reduces the need for large arterials. The existing grid should be maintained and enhanced whenever possible.

- On-street parking should exist on all streets except where transit stops or driveways are necessary. On-street parking should never be removed for traffic lanes or bicycle lanes. On-street parking reduces the demand for off-street parking and provides the pedestrian with a physical and psychological buffer from traffic.

2. Sidewalks

All streets in all parts of the Tower District should have sidewalks on both sides, without exception.

Commercial/Mixed-Use Areas

- Sidewalks in the Commercial/Mixed-Use Area should be wide, with a minimum of 10 feet of width.

- There should not be planting strips in Commercial/Mixed-Use Area sidewalks.

- The sidewalk should be divided into three zones: an outer furniture area, a central walkway, and an inner furniture area.

- The central walkway area of the sidewalk should occupy at least 50% of the sidewalk width, and should under no circumstances be less than 6 feet wide. The central walkway should be free and clear of all objects.

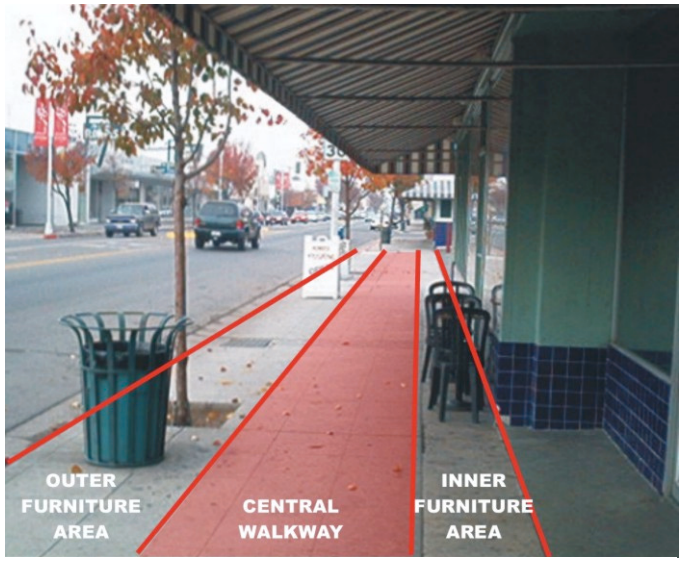
- The outer furniture area should occupy no more than 40% of the sidewalk width, provided there is sufficient walkway area. Streetlights, street trees, vending machines, bike racks, benches, transit shelters, and other street furniture should be located in this area. If there is sufficient space, dining tables or temporary signage may be placed here by adjacent businesses.

- The inner furniture area should occupy no more than 20% of the sidewalk width, provided there is sufficient walkway area. Benches, temporary signage, and dining tables may be placed here by adjacent businesses. Sidewalks narrower than 8 feet should not have an inner furniture zone.

Residential Areas

- Sidewalks should be at least 5 feet wide.

- A planting strip 3 to 5 feet wide should be located between the sidewalk and the curb of the street.



Sidewalk Zones. *Sidewalks should contain an outer furniture area, a clear central walkway, and, when there's enough room, an inner furniture area.*

III. Commercial/Mixed Use Area Guidelines

The Commercial/Mixed Use areas of the Tower District are very important to its success, particularly the Olive Avenue corridor. It is the goal of the Specific Plan Implementation Committee and the Design Review Committee to ensure that new development in these critical areas remains pedestrian-oriented and attractive, and to encourage the integration of more residences into these areas, creating a vibrant mixed-use "Main Street" atmosphere.

"Main Street." *Excellent mixed-use development: King Street in Alexandria, Virginia.*

A. Uses

1. Uses Encouraged

Uses permitted in the Tower District Main Street area should be a diverse range of commercial and residential uses that are compatible with neighborhood living and foster lively street life. These uses fit 3 general categories:

a. Pedestrian-Oriented Retail

- Pedestrian-oriented retail uses are the backbone of traditional neighborhoods. They allow residents to acquire many of their daily needs conveniently on foot, reducing the need to drive as often as in newer suburban developments.
- The presence of shopkeepers ensures "eyes on the street," which helps to improve public safety.
- A variety of pedestrian-oriented retail establishments also ensures a fairly continuous flow of pedestrians who also serve as "eyes on the street" to provide a safe environment.
- Examples of pedestrian-oriented retail establishments are restaurants, cafes, bars, small grocery stores, shops, florists, bakeries, banks, and barber shops. Some small offices, which depend on foot traffic and pedestrian visibility, such as travel agents, are also included in this category for the purposes of these guidelines.

Pedestrian-oriented Retail. *A "Main Street" area in downtown San Luis Obispo, California.*

- The scale of individual retail spaces should generally be limited to 10,000 square feet in order to ensure diversity and pedestrian scale. “Big box” retailing is not appropriate in the Tower District.

b. Offices

- Various professional offices, including medical, business, and administrative offices. Laboratories for medical, dental, and optometrical uses are also included in this category.

c. Residential

- While the predominant focus of the Main Street area may be commercial, it is not a single use highway strip or office park. It is an integrated part of the neighborhood that includes residences and provides a high level of convenience and amenity for those who choose to live there.

- Most residential units in the Commercial/Mixed-Use area will be multi-family in nature and will be located on upper-floors of mixed-use buildings.

- Hotels and “Bed and Breakfast” Inns should also be permitted.

2. Uses Discouraged

Certain uses are not compatible with a pedestrian-oriented traditional neighborhood and, therefore, should not be allowed:

a. Automobile Oriented Commercial Uses

- Certain businesses cater excessively to the automobile and are not compatible with a pedestrian-oriented area. These include service stations, auto repair shops, automobile sales, etc. These uses should not be permitted.

- When proposed, new structures for fast-food establishments and convenience stores, among other uses proposed in the Commercial/Mixed-Use Area, need to be oriented for pedestrians (as opposed to the automobile). These uses should

Automobile Oriented Commercial. *Suburban-style highway commercial development is not compatible with the Tower District and will not be permitted.*

not be designed as they are in a conventional suburban setting, but rather should be designed appropriately for the neighborhood, as set forth in these guidelines.

- "Drive-thrus" should not be permitted in the Tower District.

b. Other Land Intensive Uses

- Other uses that are very land-intensive and thus incompatible with the fine-grained land use patterns of a Main Street environment should not be permitted. Even uses listed above as appropriate should not be allowed if they are too large.

c. Industrial Uses

- Industrial uses are not compatible with the Tower Commercial/Mixed-Use area and should not be permitted.

d. Civic Uses

- Most civic uses, such as churches, schools, community centers, etc., are not an ideal component of the mix of uses in a "main street" area.

3. How to Properly Mix Uses

It is strongly recommended that new buildings in the Commercial/Mixed-Use Area mix uses. In order to ensure that the different uses are designed compatibly, the following guidelines should apply:

a. Location of Residential, Office, and Retail in Relation to Each Other

- Individual buildings may mix retail, office, and residential uses.

- The basement level of a building may have retail, office, or residential uses.

- The ground floor of all buildings in the Main Street area should be occupied primarily by retail uses or small office uses, which

Mixed Use. *This building shows the proper relationship between residential uses and retail uses when located in the same building. The residential uses are located on the upper two floors, while the retail is at the street-level.*

depend on foot traffic.

- The second floor of buildings may have limited retail uses, either as a continuation of a street-level retail use, or as a separate space with its own sidewalk entrance.

- Residential uses should be located on upper-floors.

- Office uses should be located on upper-floors.

b. Building Techniques to Minimize Conflicts Between Uses

- In order to facilitate a harmonious mix of uses, construction techniques should be used to minimize conflicts. Examples include soundproof walls/floors between uses, heavier walls or insulation than are used in single-use buildings, dual pane windows, and separate entrances and interior circulation halls for residential and non-residential areas of a building.

B. Lot Size

1. Width

- On average, lots should be around 50 to 75 feet in width, and no larger than 200 feet in width.

2. Depth

- On average, lots should be 100 to 150 feet in depth. Except in the instances of unusually narrow blocks, lots should not extend the entire depth of the block, fronting on 2 parallel streets. Rather, lots should extend to mid-block.

3. Area

- Lots should not exceed 1 acre in size. Large-scale suburban-style shopping centers are strongly discouraged. Rather, the pre-War pattern of small structures on small, individually owned lots should be encouraged. Larger lots which are redeveloped should

be subdivided whenever possible.

C. Building Placement

1. Number of Buildings

- Each lot should only have one primary building. The primary building will be the biggest, will be located at the front of the lot, and must clearly be primary in its use. Complex development with multiple buildings arranged on large lots amongst landscaping and parking is discouraged.

- Each lot may have one accessory building. Accessory buildings must be smaller than the primary building, must be located behind the primary building, and must clearly be secondary in use to the primary building. Examples would include garages and storage sheds.

2. Building Orientation

- Buildings should not be angled in plan relative to the adjacent street right-of-way. Facades should be parallel to rights-of-way.

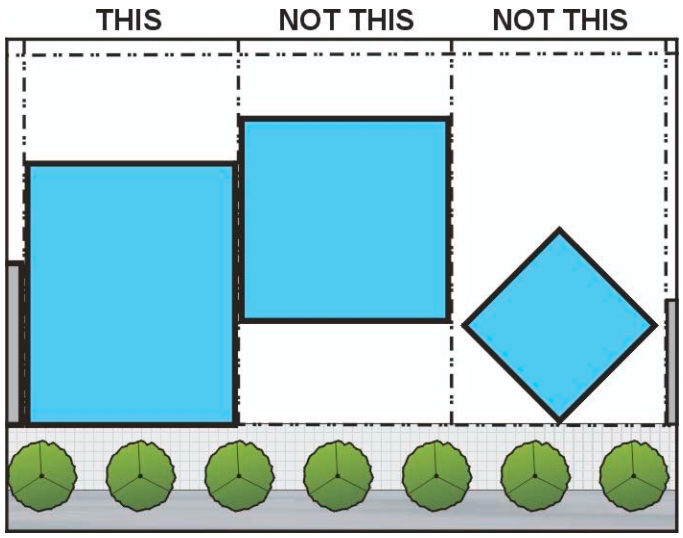
3. Front Setbacks

- No primary building should be set back from the street in the Main Street area. All primary buildings should be built out to the front lot line at the sidewalk edge. Buildings that are set back damage the pedestrian experience.

- Front facades should not be angled in plan relative to the front property line.

4. Side Setbacks

- Buildings in the Commercial/Mixed-Use Core should stand shoulder-to-shoulder, without gaps or spaces between them, forming a solid, continuous streetwall. This spatially defines the street, creating a pleasant pedestrian environment and forming a clear separation between the public and private realms. In



Front Setbacks and Building Orientation. *In the "Main Street" area buildings should be brought right up to the street, with no front setbacks. Front setbacks inconvenience pedestrians, degrade the definition of the street as a public place, and leads to highway-strip signage that must "shout" at passing motorists.*

particular, the front 12 feet of a building must be built out to the side lot lines, unless a side setback is necessary for vehicular access or a pedestrian passage from a parking area to the street.

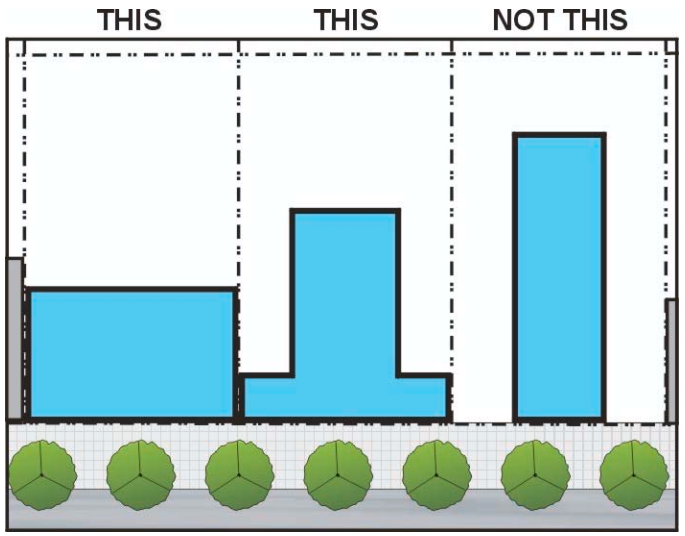
- If a side setback is necessary, then a minimum of 75% of the street frontage should consist of building façade.
- The side walls beyond the front 12 feet may be set back.
- Walls built out to the side lot lines may not have windows or doors and must meet building code standards for firewalls.
- For corner lots, sides facing a street should be treated like the front of the lot, and setbacks should not be permitted.

5. Rear Setbacks

- There is no minimum requirement for rear setbacks. The rear of the lot is the preferred location for parking lots, yards, or other unbuilt areas.

D. Building Height

- The maximum height for new structures in the Commercial/Mixed-Use Area should be 4 stories. No structure should exceed 55 feet in height.
- All new primary structures should have a minimum height of 2 stories. However, in instances where an existing structure is destroyed by fire, etc., it is exempt from this 2-story minimum height requirement and may be rebuilt as it originally existed.



Side Setbacks. *Main Street buildings should be built shoulder-to-shoulder to form a continuous street wall.*

E. Parking/Vehicular Access

1. Parking Requirement

Due to its mixed-use, walkable nature, parking should be handled differently in the Tower District than in other areas of the City. While most visitors may arrive into the district via an automobile, they typically only park once, and then walk from destination to destination thereafter—unlike suburban locations, where visitors usually drive and re-park from destination to destination. Also, with a mix of uses, there is more opportunity for shared parking, since some uses are idle while others are busy. Furthermore, the amount of parking allowed should be limited, because too much surface parking degrades the pedestrian experience and dilutes the neighborhood's "critical mass." Therefore, parking requirements in the Commercial/Mixed-Use Area should be handled as follows:

- Minimum: The minimum amount of parking provided should be at least 40% of the minimum parking requirement of the C-5 zone district.

- Maximum: The maximum amount of parking allowed should be no more than 120% of the minimum parking requirement of the C-5 zone district.

2. Surface Parking Lot Design

- As stated above, the rear of the lot is the preferred location for surface parking.

- Surface parking lots adjacent to a street should only be approved if site conditions make it impossible to locate the parking behind the building. Under no circumstances should a parking lot be located between a building and the street for new construction.

- In no case should surface parking occupy more than 50% of a lot.

- Handicapped and bicycle parking should be provided per current

City standards.

- When a parking lot must be located adjacent to a street, a clearly marked pedestrian walkway must be provided through the parking lot from the sidewalk to the entrance of the building if the building pre-dates these guidelines and is set back.

- When a parking lot must be located adjacent to a street, it should be buffered from the street with a screening wall or fence 3 to 4 feet in height in order to enclose the parking lot. The wall should be constructed of bricks, stone, or similar materials. Chain-link fencing is inappropriate.

- Screening walls or fencing must be attractively designed and must use materials complementary or identical to those used for the building

- Screening walls should be located 2-3 feet back from the sidewalk to allow adequate room for landscape materials. In addition, greenery/vegetation on or through the wall or fence is encouraged.

- Screening walls must have one pedestrian access point for every 50 feet of street frontage.

3. Parking Lot Landscaping

- Due to the pedestrian orientation of the Commercial/Mixed Use area, landscaping will be required

- Parking lots should have landscaping as required by City standards of 1 shade tree for every 2 parking stalls. Trees should be a minimum of 15 gallons when planted. However, in pedestrian-oriented urban environments, some landscaping techniques, such as grassy berms, are inappropriate.

- All proposals must provide for street trees as required by city standards. Street tree species and size should be consistent with the existing Tower District streetscape and City requirements.

Parking Lot Screening Wall. *Parking lots which are located adjacent to a street should be bordered by a screening wall.*

Parking Lot Landscaping. This commercial lot shows adequate landscaping for the parking lot.

- All new landscape areas are required to install automatic irrigation. Irrigation should be adjusted to avoid overspray onto hardscaped areas, including sidewalks, buildings, sidewalks, etc.

- Property owners must routinely maintain landscaping including the replacement of any diseased or dead plant/tree. Trees should not be topped; instead, trees should be pruned to encourage upward growth and tree canopy development.

4. Parking Structure/Underground Parking Design

- Parking structures and underground parking areas are permitted and encouraged in the Commercial/Mixed-Use areas.

- Parking structures located at the front of the lot must be wrapped with storefronts at street-level, and the upper-floors must be architecturally indistinguishable from other buildings.

- Underground parking areas should not be visible from the street. Buildings suspended over parking areas by stilts should not be permitted.

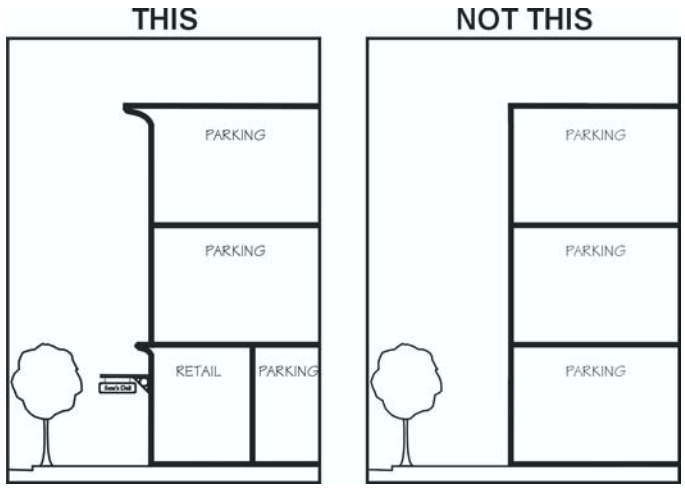
5. Proper Location and Treatment of Vehicular Access

- Automobile curb cuts across the sidewalk should be kept to an absolute minimum. They endanger and inconvenience pedestrians, especially those in wheelchairs. When possible, curb cuts should serve more than one lot.

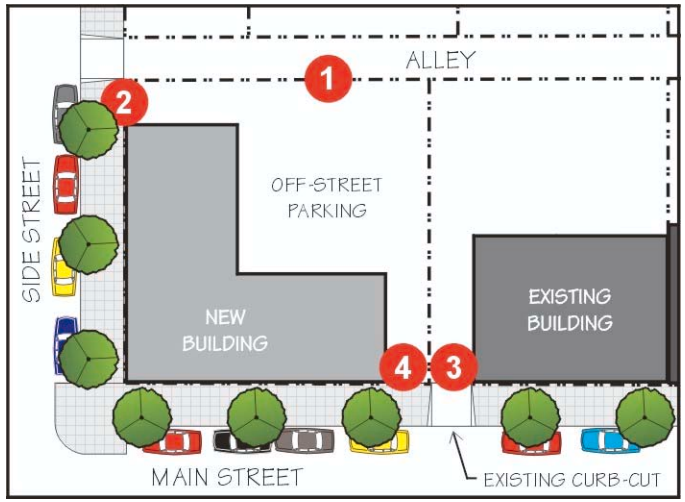
- For lots with alley access, no curb cuts will be granted from a street under any circumstances. Access must be taken from the alley.

- For corner lots without alley access, access should be taken from the lowest classified street on which the lot fronts. For example, a parking lot for a building located on the corner of Olive and Lucerne will be granted access from Lucerne only.

- For interior lots without alley access, an attempt must be made to share side street access with a neighboring property through



Parking Structure Design. *Parking garages should be lined with retail storefronts at the street-level, rather than presenting blank walls to the street.*



Location of Vehicular Access. *Vehicular access should be kept away from the main street whenever possible. This illustration shows priority for access for new development. Alleys are the first priority, side streets, the second, and the main street, the least desirable location for vehicular access. If access can be shared with an existing main street curb cut, that option should be utilized. New curb cuts will only be granted on main streets if the other options are not available.*

an easement. If this is not possible, then an attempt must be made to share a curb cut with a neighboring interior lot. If this is not possible, access will be permitted from the Main Street.

- If a lot with non-conforming curb cuts is redeveloped or significantly altered, access must be made to conform to these guidelines, and all unnecessary curb cuts must be removed and the sidewalk restored.

F. On-Site Open Space

- For sites that have residential uses, provisions should be made for some sort of semi-private open space.

- These areas should be sizable enough to be functional, but needn't be excessively large, and shouldn't occupy a larger portion of the lot than the structures.

- These open spaces should be clearly separated from the street, and if located on the ground they should be located at the rear of the lot behind the primary building

- On-site open spaces should be completely inaccessible to the general public.

- On-site open space may take the form of play areas, yards, decks, patios, or gardens. An alternative to ground-level open spaces should be rooftop spaces.

G. Façade Elements

The design of building facades is one of the most critical features of a neighborhood. While the Tower District is a neighborhood of diverse architectural styles, there are certain fundamental elements that all of the best buildings in the area have in common.

1. Architectural Design

It is not the intention of this document to regulate the architectural style of individual buildings. Creativity and diversity are encouraged. However, good architecture is critical to the creation of a beloved neighborhood, and the following guidelines should apply:

- New buildings should make every attempt to fit in to their surroundings. This does not mean that you should copy the existing buildings, but that you should respect the context of any new building, attempting to tie the building into its neighbors through the use of similar massing, materials, or some other technique.

- Renovations of, and additions to, historic buildings must follow the original style. Victorian gingerbread should not be added to an art deco building, nor should a classical structure be remodeled to be modernistic.

- Materials used in renovations of, and additions to, historic buildings should be consistent with the original materials. For example, stucco should not be used in place of the clapboard siding on a Craftsman.

- New buildings that mimic historical styles are acceptable and welcome, but they must be accurate interpretations. A well-done modern building in a traditional style is very pleasing, but a poorly done imitation of a historical home is quite unpleasant and looks cartoonish and fake. Special attention must be paid to materials, proportions, and ornamentation originally used in the proposed style.

Façade Glossary of Terms

Bulkhead *– A "kickplate" at the bottom of a storefront bay below the display windows, usually made of tile, stone, or carved wood panels.*

Cornice *– A projecting, continuous, prominent architectural feature near the top of a building.*

Display Windows *– Windows that are specifically designed to allow for the presentation of merchandise to pedestrians.*

Double-hung Window *– A two-part window, with upper and lower sashes that open by sliding vertically on pulleys.*

Façade *– The exterior wall of a building, particularly a wall that faces a street.*

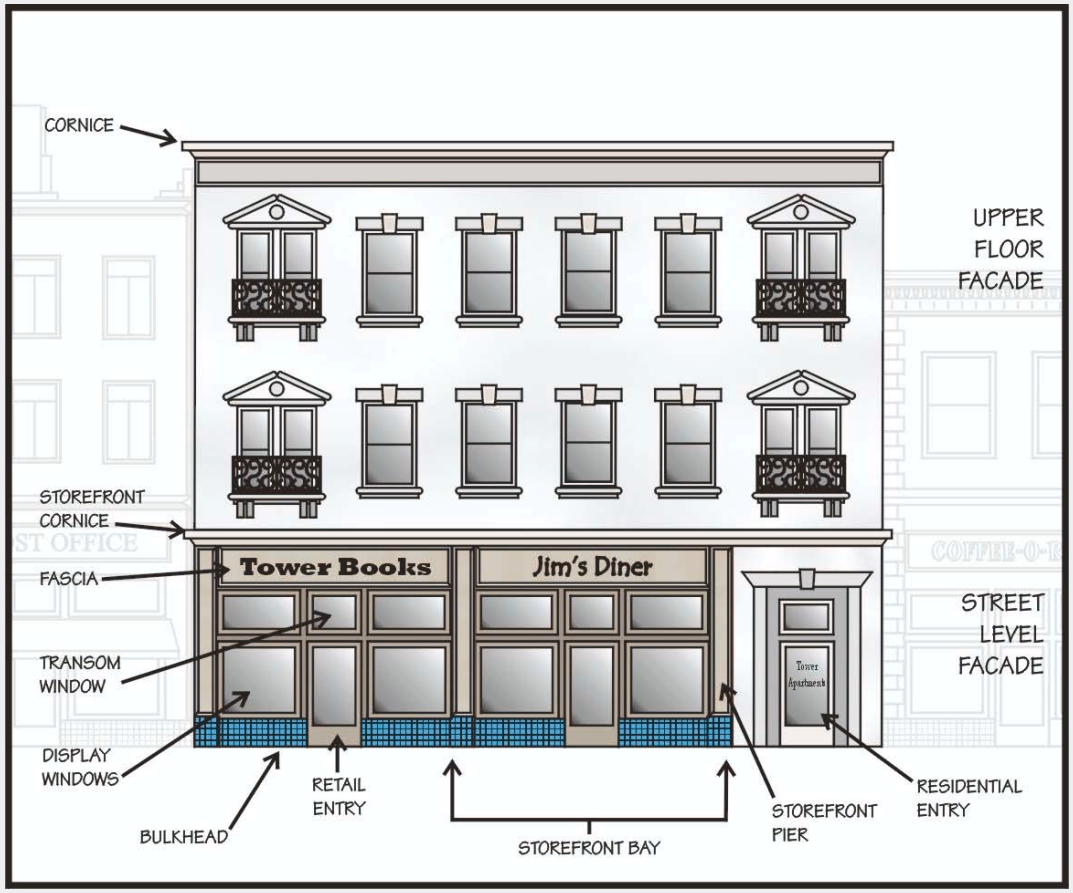
Fascia *– The horizontal area of the storefront façade that is below the storefront cornice and above the entry and display windows.*

Parapet *– A low, solid, wall or railing along the edge of a roof that blocks visibility to rooftop equipment.*

Pier *– A vertical support that divides storefront bays.*

Storefront Bay *– A vertical division of the street-level façade that consists of piers, a frieze, display windows, and a bulkhead.*

Transom Window *– A hinged window over a door.*



2. Storefront Bays

- Street-level façades wider than 30 feet or consisting of more than 1 retail space should be divided into a series of storefront bays.
- Bays should be 12 to 25 feet wide and should maintain a consistent width along each façade.
- Each bay should typically include piers, a door, display windows, a fascia, a bulkhead, and a transom.
- There should usually be one retail space per bay, but if large retail spaces may span multiple bays, the bays should remain. Secondary bays that are part of a large retail space would usually not have doors, just display windows.
- The area within a storefront bay should parallel the adjacent sidewalk, and should not be set at an angle. Part of the surface may be angled in order to form a recessed entryway, but these surfaces must be symmetrical and the overall orientation of the bay must parallel the street.

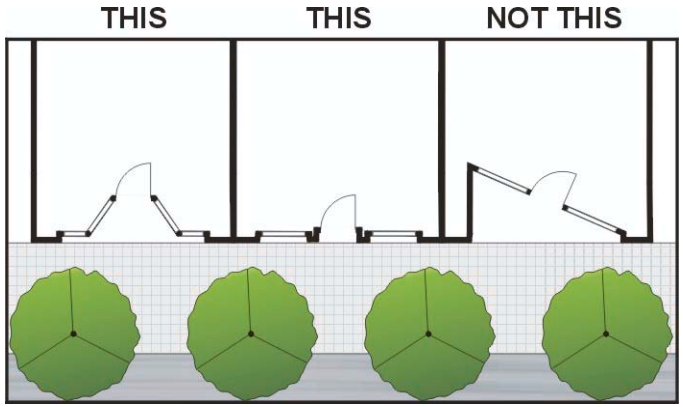
Storefront Bays. *This building shows the proper division of a street-level façade into a series of storefront bays.*

3. Storefront Piers

- Bays should be divided by piers, which should be 1 to 3 feet wide and should be made of a solid material, such as brick, stone, or wood—not glass or aluminum. Each pier should protrude outward from adjacent surfaces 3 to 6 inches.

4. Storefront Fascias

- Each bay should have a fascia area, which is a horizontal wall surface between piers, above the display windows and doors, and below the storefront cornice. This is the preferred location for wall signs.
- Storefront fascias should be uniform in size throughout the building, and should range from 2 to 5 feet in height.



Storefront Orientation. *Storefronts, even when they have recessed entries, must parallel the sidewalk.*

5. Bulkheads

- All buildings should implement a 1 to 4 foot high tile treatment on the bulkhead wall of the building façade. Bulkhead tiles should be ceramic and consist of a single, bright color.

- The bulkhead should serve as the visual "base" of the buildings and should protrude slightly from the surfaces above it.

6. Storefront Cornice

- Multi-storied buildings should use a decorative storefront cornice to differentiate the street-level storefronts from the upper-floors.

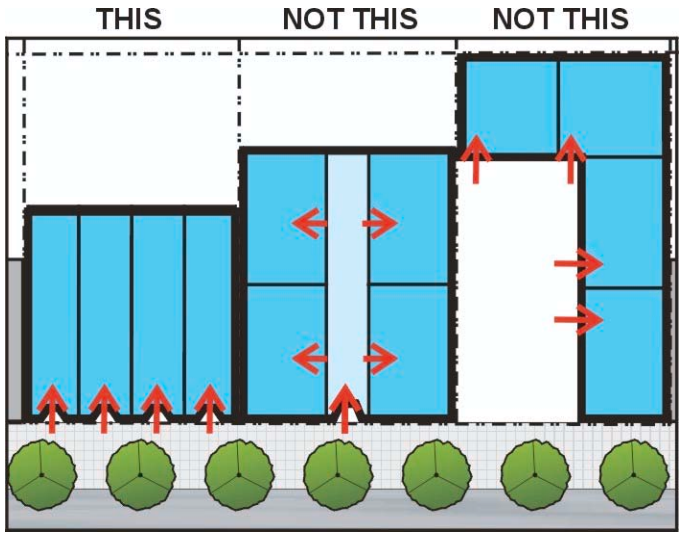
7. Location of Building Entrances

- For buildings with multiple retail spaces, each individual retail space must have its own separate entrance at the front of the building oriented to a street. Retail uses may not be arranged around an inner circulation system in a mall-like setting. Retail uses may have secondary entrances in the rear of the building.

- For buildings with apartments, all apartments must be accessed through 1 centralized entrance, which faces a street and is used exclusively to access dwellings. This entrance should be locked and secure and available only for residents and their guests. Individual dwelling units must be accessed through an interior circulation system. The suburban practice of giving each apartment its own outside entrance, accessed from shared outdoor corridors is inappropriate. Apartments may have secondary entrances in the rear to access yards or parking.

- For buildings with upper-floor office uses, all office uses must be accessed through 1 primary entrance, which faces a street. Individual offices must be accessed through an interior circulation system. The suburban practice of giving each office its own outside entrance, accessed from shared outdoor corridors is inappropriate. Office uses may have secondary entrances in the rear to access yards or parking.

Bulkheads. *Various examples of acceptable bulkhead time in the Tower District.*



Retail Entrances. *Each individual ground-level space should have its own pedestrian entrance facing the street*

8. Treatment of Primary Entrances

- All primary entrances must be located at the front of the building, parallel to the street.
- Entrances may be recessed. Recessed entryways may be no more than 6 feet deep or 10 feet wide. Exceptions may be made for theaters, in which case it may be appropriate for a larger recessed entry.
- Rails or other obstructions that block direct access from the sidewalk may not block recessed entryways.
- Entryways should be at the same grade as the sidewalk, and no steps, up or down, should be required for entry.
- For buildings with upper-floor apartments, the apartment entrance may be grand and overstated or discreet and understated, depending on the taste of the developer.
- For buildings with upper-floor office uses, the main entrance for upper-floor offices should be architecturally grand and should have a strong presence.

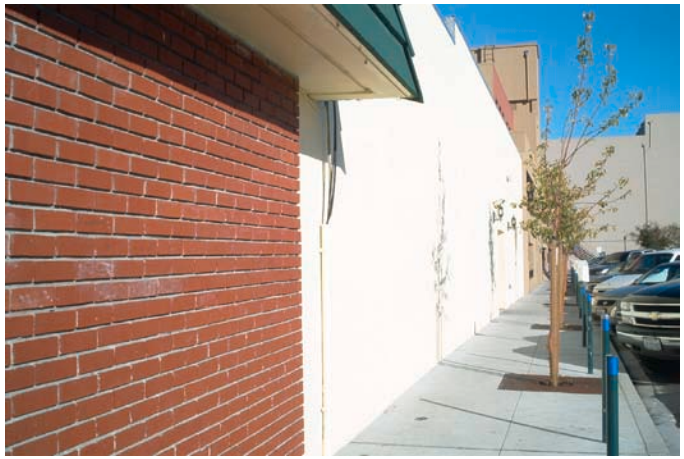
Separated Residential and Retail Entrances. *This small mixed-use building has separate entrances for retail (left) and residential (right) components.*

Recessed Storefront Entrance. *Doors into retail spaces may be recessed within the façade, as is done in this building. Note also that the entry is located at the same exact grade as the sidewalk, which is the preferred approach.*

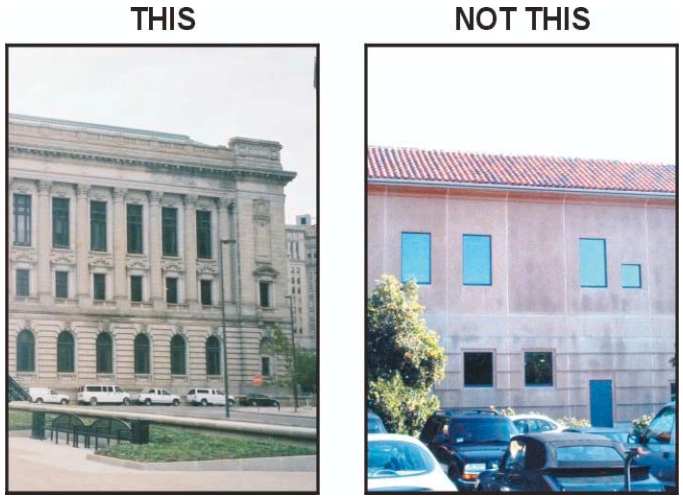
9. Windows

Windows are a critical component of a building's appearance and function. In order to ensure that buildings are attractive and the streets are safe, the following window guidelines should apply.

- Windows must be provided along all walls that face a street. Windowless walls repel pedestrians because they feel unsafe and uninteresting.
- For ground floor walls, at least 50%, but no more than 80%, of the wall area must consist of windows, arranged primarily as large storefront display windows.
- For upper-floors walls, at least 20%, but no more than 50%, of the wall area should consist of windows.
- The bottom of ground floor windows must be no more than 4 feet above the adjacent sidewalk grade.
- Windows on upper-floors should maintain coherent and consistent rhythms, both vertically and horizontally. Random and jumbled sizing and spacing of windows should be avoided.
- Upper-floor windows should be vertically oriented, or taller than they are wide. Also, each window should be individually articulated and should not form long horizontal or vertical bands.
- Upper-floor windows should not be flush with solid building surfaces, but rather should be recessed at least 4 inches from the outside wall plane.
- Upper-floor windows should be single-hung sash, double-hung sash, casement style, or other similar types. Horizontal aluminum sliders and non-opening windows are discouraged.
- Glass should be clear, not reflective, especially at the street-level.
- Vinyl or wood window frames are preferred, whereas aluminum window frames are discouraged. Frames should be shaped and



Windows. *Windowless walls repel pedestrians and are inappropriate for any wall facing a street in the Commercial/Mixed-Use Area.*



Window Rhythms. *Windows should be arranged to have understandable and pleasing patterns of sizing and spacing—both vertically and horizontally—within a building facade.*

molded to provide additional relief to the façade.

- Curtin wall systems (in which the entire wall surfaces consists only of glass) are inappropriate.

10. Block Corners

- Areas of buildings that occupy the corner of a block should be architecturally embellished to give prominence to the corner. Turrets, towers, bay windows, cupolas, and other methods should be used to make the block corner stand out.

11. Cladding Materials

- The cladding materials "palette" should be kept very simple. Buildings should not have more than 2 primary cladding materials.

- Upper-floor building primary cladding materials should convey a sense of strength and solidity. Brick, stone, and stucco are most appropriate. Stucco, when used, should not use a highly textured application such as spatter dash, which is appropriate for modern houses but not for urban "main street" buildings. Wood, vinyl, aluminum, or other materials are not appropriate.

- Storefront primary cladding materials should be brick, stone, or carved wood panels. Wood, when used, should be painted and not stained. Doors should match storefront window frames, and should be made of crafted wood, stainless steel, bronze, or other ornamental metals.

- Decorative accent materials may be brick, ceramic tile, precast concrete, molded plaster, caved wood, or other similar materials.

- Accessory buildings visible from the street should use materials consistent with the primary structure.

- Corporate design elements for chain businesses should be downplayed to assure integration in the neighborhood.

- There should be a visual distinction between street-level and

Block Corners. *This new building in Downtown Mountain View, California, gives appropriate architectural prominence to the block corner.*

Visual Distinction Between Upper and Lower Floors. *This building uses different colors and materials to distinguish the street-level storefronts from the upper-level apartments.*

upper-level floors. This can be accomplished by using different materials and/or colors for storefronts and upper stories. It is appropriate, however, to use upper-floor colors and materials for street-level entrances to upper-floor uses.

12. Security

- Security gates for storefront businesses must be located inside buildings, not outside.

- Security window bars are inappropriate for the Tower District and should not be used on windows directly facing a street. They detract from the architectural beauty of the neighborhood and present an image of instability and fear.

- Alarm boxes for security systems should be placed in an inconspicuous location to limit street visibility.

13. Awnings

- The use of awnings is encouraged on both street-level floors and upper-floors.

- Awnings should be constructed out of canvas or other similar materials.

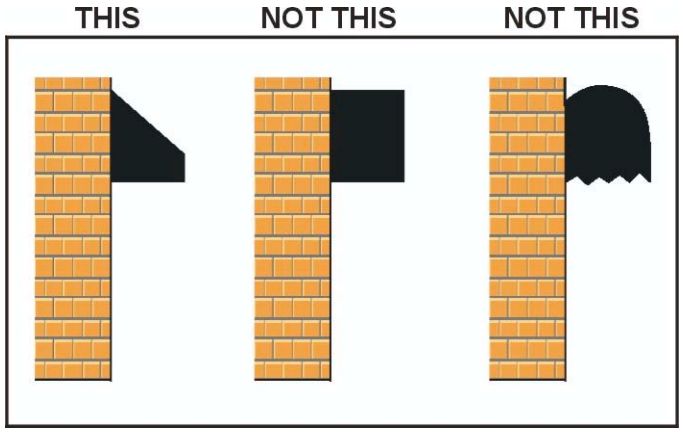
- Awnings should be of a traditional, triangular profile shape, as opposed to square or rectangle.

- Retractable awnings are strongly encouraged.

- The building should support all awnings. Structural supports should not be placed in public rights-of-way.

- Upper-floor awnings should be located directly over the windows and should be the same width as the window.

- Street-level awnings may extend horizontally over multiple windows.



Awning Profiles. *Awnings should be triangular in profile, not rounded or boxed.*

- Street-level awnings should leave 8 feet of vertical clearance over the sidewalk, and should not interfere with street trees, streetlights, or traffic.

14. Roof Forms

- The roof forms of buildings, as viewed from the street, should be generally flat (not pitched) in nature. Parapets, cornices, and other architectural methods should be used to add distinction and ornamentation.

15. Balconies

- Balconies are allowed and encouraged. However, they must be attractive and architecturally incorporated into the building. Balconies that appear to be afterthoughts will be strongly discouraged.

- Balconies must have at least 10 feet of clearance above the sidewalk.

16. External Stairways

- For stairways used to access upper-floors, internal enclosed stairways are preferred. Exterior stairways are inappropriate and should not be used under any circumstances. External stairways and walkways are suburban configurations, and do not help to create the kind of urbanity that is most appropriate in the "Main Street" area.

17. Façade Articulation

- In general, facades should be relatively simple and flat and should address the street squarely. Rather than using radical stepbacks and recesses to create visual interest, pilasters, columns, cornices, and similar forms of surface relief should be used instead.

Façade Articulation. *Buildings in the "Main Street" area should be less articulated than their suburban counterparts. Rather than using recesses and stepbacks to achieve visual interest, elements such as columns, pilasters, and cornices should be used.*

Balconies. *Balconies should be beautiful, and should be architecturally incorporated into the design of the building, rather than just being added on as an afterthought.*

H. Outdoor Dining

1. Sidewalk Dining

- Sidewalks may be used for dining areas by adjacent businesses provided there is sufficient width. Dining tables and chairs may be located either in the outer furniture area or inner furniture area. No dining may take place in the central walkway area of the sidewalk.

- The central walkway area of the sidewalk should occupy at least 50% of the sidewalk width, and should under no circumstances be at less than 5 feet wide. The central walkway should be free and clear of all objects.

- The outer furniture area may occupy no more than 40% of the sidewalk width, provided there is sufficient walkway area.

- The inner furniture area may occupy no more than 20% of the sidewalk width, provided there is sufficient walkway area. Sidewalks narrower than 8 feet should not have an inner furniture area.

Sidewalk Dining. *The sidewalk shown here places tables and chairs for dining in the appropriate location, toward the curb. A walkway of 5 feet is maintained, and no inner furniture area is used since the sidewalk is too narrow.*

2. Recessed Patios

- Recessed patios are allowed, but should only be used when sidewalk dining or rear patio dining is not possible.

- Recessed patios should be limited to 25% of the total building façade.

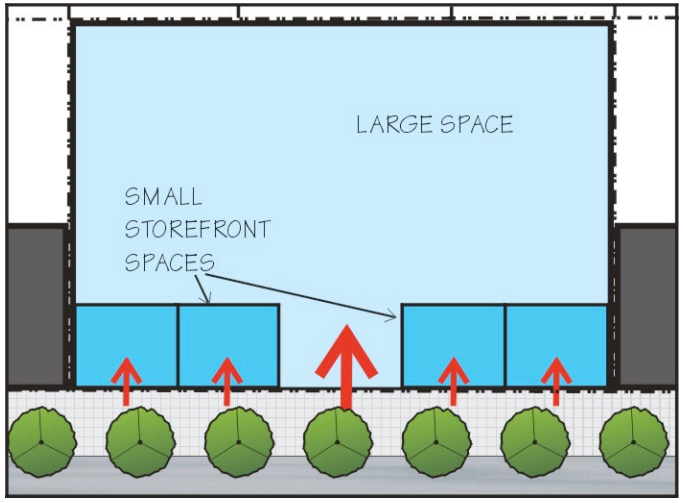
- Recessed patios should not be more than 10 feet deep.

- A solid wall 3 to 4 feet in height should enclose recessed patios. Walls should be an extension of the building and consist of the same materials.

I. Size of Retail Spaces

- In general, individual retail spaces should not exceed 10,000 square feet in size. Exceptions should be made for grocery stores, theaters, and other special circumstances. Exceptions will not be made for retail stores or restaurants. “Big Box” style retailing is not appropriate in the Tower District.

- When a large use is appropriate, its street frontage should be limited to 50 feet, and it should be “wrapped” with small storefronts at the ground level. An excellent example of this technique is the Tower Theater. This will prevent large expanses of inactive sidewalk and will keep the Main Street area lively.



Large Retail Spaces. *Shown above is an example of “wrapping” a large single use with smaller storefront spaces. In instances where a large single space is appropriate, it must be dealt with using this technique.*

J. Signs

1. General Sign Guidelines

- Signage should be architecturally incorporated into the building and should not obscure architectural features of the building. Signs should be mounted in locations that respect the design of a building and should not cover windows, grillwork, pilasters, cornices, and ornamental features.

- Each business should be entitled to at least 50 square feet of sign area, and no individual sign should exceed 100 square feet in area.

- The total area of all signs for a building should not exceed two square feet for each foot of street frontage occupied by the building. Projecting signs, under-awning signs, and blade signs will not be included in this calculation.

- Internally illuminated “can” signs are inappropriate and are discouraged.

- Painted wall signs should be done by a professional, should be of high quality, and should be subject to DRC review.

Painted Wall and Awning Signs. *This building tastefully incorporates both a painted wall sign and an awning sign.*

Sign Types

Wall Sign – A sign painted or mounted on a building wall that projects less than 12 inches from the wall.

Window Sign – A sign displayed on or within 3 feet of a window or glass door and is visible from outside of the building in which it is displayed.

Awning Sign – A sign that is painted, printed, or stenciled onto the surface of an awning.

Under-Awning Sign – A pedestrian-oriented sign that is suspended beneath and awning over and perpendicular to the sidewalk.

Projecting Sign – A pedestrian-oriented sign mounted on a building that extends horizontally at least 12 inches from the wall over the sidewalk.

Marquee Sign – A roof-like sign which projects over the sidewalk entrance to a theater. Typically includes a large neon sign announcing the name of the theater and a readerboard sign announcing the names of acts and shows at the theater.

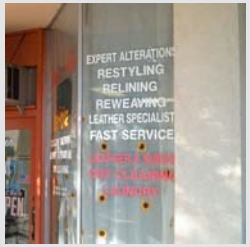
Vertical Blade Sign – A tall, narrow sign mounted to the side of a building.

Roof Sign – A sign that is mounted on the roof of a building and extends above the roofline.

Pole Sign – A sign that is self supporting, and is mounted on a pole in a fixed location unattached to a building.

Monument Sign – A low-profile freestanding sign that is mounted directly into the ground on a permanent, fixed base unattached to a building.

Wall Sign

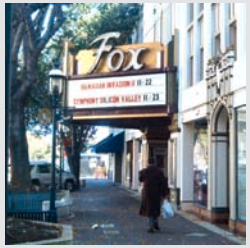


Window Sign

Awning Sign

Under-Awning Sign

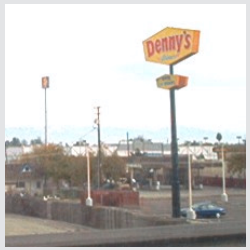
Projecting Sign



Marquee Sign

Vertical Blade Sign

Roof Sign



Pole Sign

Monument Sign

Signs should be constructed of high quality materials that are appropriate to a pedestrian environment, such as wood, metal or neon.

- Signs should have individual raised lettering and should be externally illuminated.
- The sign's content should be limited to the business name or logo.
- All electrical conduit should be concealed from public view.

2. Wall Signs

- Wall signs are the preferred sign type for indicating the name and nature of a business located within a retail storefront.
- Storefront fascias and friezes are the most appropriate locations for wall signs.
- Wall signs on fascias, friezes, lintels, piers, spandrels, and other areas should be sized to fit within these surfaces and not extend beyond them.
- Wall signs should be centered over the corresponding storefront entrance. If a large store spans multiple bays, the wall sign may be centered over the whole frontage occupied by the store.
- No wall signs should be located within the storefront pier except for barbershop poles, restaurant menus, and upper-floor tenant directories.

3. Window Signs

- Total coverage of signs on the exterior or interior of windows at the street-level should not exceed 20 percent of the total window area visible from the exterior of the building. Signs should not be placed on upper-floor windows.
- Window signage area counts towards total allowed signage area noted above (2 square feet per linear foot of street frontage).

Externally Illuminated Signage. *The pictures above are good examples of externally illuminated signs.*

THIS

This wall sign fits completely within the frieze area and does not obscure any architectural features of the building.

NOT THIS

This wall sign covers up part of a pilaster and hangs over the bottom of the frieze.

- Window signs should not contain product advertising.

4. Awning Signs

- Signage on the awning may be located on the valence, but not the angled portion of the awning.
- Lettering should be no higher than 10 inches.
- Signage on awnings counts toward the total permitted sign area.

5. Projecting Signs and Under-Awning Signs

- Projecting signs and under-awning signs are allowed and encouraged.
- Projecting signs may be mounted directly to the building façade, typically on a pier or fascia.
- Projecting signs should be horizontal and pedestrian-oriented in nature, and should not extend vertically beyond the roofline (one story buildings) or storefront cornice (multi-story buildings).
- Projecting signs and under-awning signs should be limited to one 18 square foot double-faced sign on each street frontage occupied by each tenant. Faces of double sided signs should be parallel.
- Projecting signs and under-awning signs should not project more than 6 feet beyond the property line and should not encroach within 3 feet of the curb.
- Projecting signs and under-awning signs will not count toward the total permitted sign area for a building.

Projecting Signs. *Signs like this building façade mounted projecting sign are encouraged.*

6. Marquee Signs

- Marquee signs are permitted when used exclusively for theaters. Animated and changeable message signs or marquee signs used for product advertisement are prohibited.

- Marquee signs should not be counted toward the total sign area permitted, but their size should be limited based on functional and aesthetic concerns as determined by the DRC.

7. Vertical Blade Signs

- Vertical blade signs should be permitted for hotels and theaters only and should be limited to 1 per building.

- Vertical blade signs should in no way obscure upper-floor windows, and should be mounted directly to a solid pier or pediment area between windows.

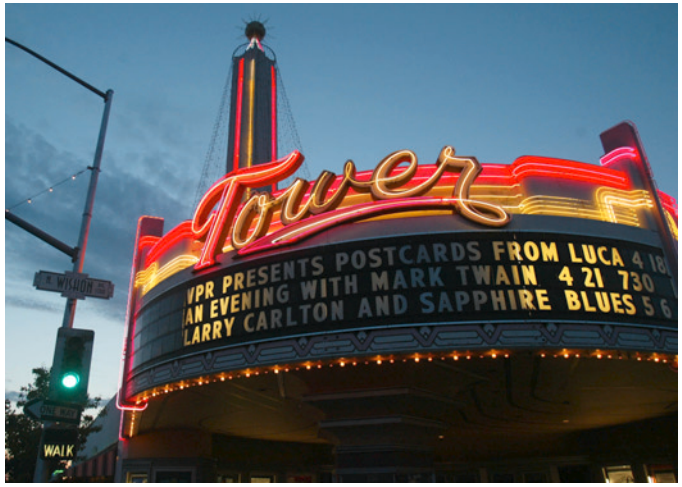
- Vertical blade signs should not extend below the storefront cornice and should not extend more than 10 feet above the roof line.

- Vertical blade signs should not project more than 6 feet beyond the property line and should not encroach within 3 feet of the curb.

- Vertical blade signs will not count toward the total permitted sign area for a building.

8. Roof Signs

- Roof signs are generally inappropriate in the Tower District. Roof signs are appropriate, however, when incorporated into towers, shaped parapets, or other architectural features, rather than simply being mounted on the roof.



Marquee Signs. *The Tower District Theater marquee sign is appropriate for its type of use.*

Roof Signs. *This roof sign exemplifies the architecture of this building.*

9. Pole Signs and Monument Signs

Freestanding signs of all types, including pole signs and monument signs, are inappropriate in the Tower District. Freestanding signs are more appropriate in contemporary highway commercial areas, not walkable traditional neighborhood "main streets." No new construction should be allowed for any freestanding signs. Freestanding signs should only be allowed for buildings that pre-date these guidelines and are set back from the street 10 feet or more and thus depend on a freestanding sign for visibility. In these instances freestanding signs may be allowed, but must conform to the following guidelines:

- When a pre-existing building is set back more than 10 feet from the roadway, a monument sign may be permitted. Under no circumstances should new pole signs be erected.

- Monument signs will be limited to 60 square feet in area.

- No monument sign should exceed 4.5 feet in height.

- There may be only 1 monument sign per parcel. If a parcel has multiple tenants, they must all be advertised on a single monument sign.

- Monument signs should be set back at least 3 feet from the sidewalk edge.

K. Accessory Buildings

- Accessory buildings must be located behind the main building. If visible from the street, accessory buildings should resemble the primary building architecturally.

L. Mechanical Equipment

- Elevator penthouses, HVAC units and other roof-mounted equipment should be screened by a parapet wall and located on the side or rear of the structure to limit street visibility. Parapet

wall materials must be consistent with materials used for the rest of the façade and should be incorporated in the building's design. Parapet walls should be at least 1 foot higher than the mechanical equipment.

- Architectural consideration should be given to buffer the visual impacts of trash enclosures, storage areas, loading areas, utility boxes and any other needed but unattractive aspects to a business.

M. Lighting

- Lighting fixtures should complement the architectural style of the primary structure. Industrial style lighting, such as flood lighting or fluorescent lighting, is prohibited.

- Lighting, other than parking lot lighting, should be permanently fixed to the structure.0

- Every effort should be made to maintain the historical lighting where it exists—e.g. the pineapple lights of Van Ness.

Building Attached Lighting. *The lighting on this Tower District establishment compliments the style of the architecture and is encouraged.*

Pineapple Lights. *Historical pineapple lights found throughout the Tower District, as shown at left, should be maintained.*

IV. Medium-High Density Residential Area Guidelines

Outside of the commercial/mixed-use core, primarily along major streets, lies a zone of medium-high density residential uses. These areas are a vital component of the neighborhood. They offer a range of affordable housing types for residents, and a slightly more peaceful atmosphere than the commercial/mixed-use area. Unlike suburban apartment complexes, lots are small and individually owned. Large-scale "complex" development is not appropriate and is strongly discouraged. While not encouraged, single family residences are allowed.

A. Uses

1. Uses Encouraged

The following uses are appropriate for moderate density areas and should be encouraged:

a. Multi-Family Residential

- *Tower 4-plexes* are an appropriate multi-family housing type for the Moderate-High Density area. Tower 4-plexes are typically 2 story buildings, with 2 units per floor. Each unit usually has its own entrance accessed from the front porch, with the upper-floor units each having an entrance which leads to a private, enclosed stairway leading up to the second floor unit.

- *Walk-up apartment houses*, such as The Nelson on Van Ness south of McKinley, are an appropriate form of multi-family housing. These apartment houses typically have 8 to 16 units and are 2 to 3 stories in height. A single street entrance, with a double-loaded corridor layout, characterizes them, i.e., each floor has a central interior corridor, with apartments lined up on each side.

Apartment Houses. *Typical Tower District apartment houses of the pre-WWII vintage on Van Ness Avenue.*

Tower 4-Plex *at Wishon and McKinley.*

- *Stacked flats* are a type that are not currently common in the Tower District, but which would be appropriate. These are narrow buildings, perhaps 20 to 30 feet wide, with 1 apartment per floor. Stacked flats are usually 2 or 3 stories tall, and thus usually have 2 or 3 apartments. Usually, each unit has its own outside entrance, and upper-floor apartments are accessed via private interior stairways.

- *Courtyard apartments* are apartment buildings that are shaped like a letter "U," with the space in the middle landscaped as a courtyard. These are sometimes 1 story, but often 2 stories in height. Each unit typically has its own outside entrance. In 2 story examples, the upper-floors are usually accessed by a shared outdoor staircase, which leads to an outdoor walkway that is used to access the apartments.

- *Bungalow courts* are a grouping of multiple detached apartments around a courtyard on a single lot.

- *Townhouses* are apartment units arranged in a row, in a fashion similar to rowhouses. Each apartment has its own exterior entrance and there is no vertical stacking of apartments.

b. Single-Family, Attached

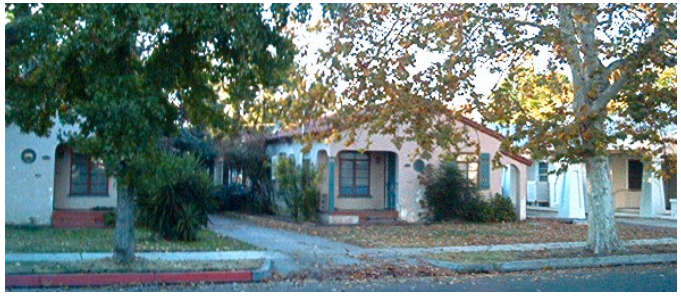
- *Rowhouses,* narrow single-family homes that are built completely out to the side lot lines and form a solid street wall, are appropriate in the Medium-High Density Residential Area. Rowhouses are typically 2 or 3 stories in height.

c. Small, Limited Commercial Uses

- On Olive Avenue, east of Van Ness, small commercial uses are allowed via the C-P zone district.

Walk Up Apartment House *at Belmont and Broadway.*

Courtyard Apartments *at Linden and Floradora.*



Bungalow Court *at Linden and Fern.*

d. Civic Uses

- Neighborhood-scaled civic uses, such as churches, schools, community centers, etc. are appropriate in the Medium-High Density Residential Area. However, like other uses, these must be appropriately scaled. The suburban convention of building massive institutions with large automobile catchment areas is not compatible with the traditional neighborhood structure and should not be allowed. Civic uses must be small in scale and must primarily serve the immediate neighborhood.

2. Uses Discouraged

The following uses are inappropriate for moderate density areas and should not be constructed in this zone:

a. Suburban-style apartment complexes

b. "Highway Strip" commercial shopping centers

c. Commercial uses (except for Olive east of Van Ness)

d. Industrial uses

B. Lot Size

1. Width

- On average, lots should be around 50 to 75 feet in width, and no larger than 100 feet in width.

2. Depth

- On average, lots should be 100 to 150 feet in depth. Except in the instances of unusually narrow blocks, lots should not extend the entire depth of the block, fronting on 2 parallel streets. Rather, lots should extend to mid-block.

***Townhouses** at Linden and Hedges.*

***Suburban Style Apartments**, on large lots and surrounded by gates, are not appropriate in the Tower District.*

3. Area

- Lots should not exceed 1/2 acre in size. Large-scale suburban-style complexes are strongly discouraged. Rather, the pre-War pattern of small apartment houses on small, individually-owned lots should be encouraged.

C. Building Placement

1. Number of Buildings

- Generally, each lot should only have one primary building. The primary building will be the biggest, will be located at the front of the lot, and must clearly be primary in its use. “Complex” style development with multiple buildings arranged on large lots amongst landscaping and parking should be strongly discouraged. Exceptions will be made for “bungalow courts,” described later in this section.

- Each lot may have one accessory building. Accessory buildings must be smaller than the primary building, must be located behind the primary building, and must clearly be secondary in use to the primary building. Examples would include garages, storage sheds and granny flats.

2. Building Orientation

- Buildings should not be angled in plan relative to the adjacent street right-of-way. Facades should be parallel to rights-of-way.

3. Front Setbacks

- Unless mandated by the zoning for the parcel, front setbacks are allowed but not required. If front setbacks are used, they should average 5 to 10 feet and should not exceed 20 feet. First floors of houses or apartment buildings placed less than 10 feet from the sidewalk should be elevated 3 to 5 feet above grade to ensure privacy.

- If the block is built up, then setbacks for new buildings must

match those of existing buildings.

4. **Side Setbacks**

   - Unless mandated by the zoning for the parcel, side setbacks are allowed but not required. If side setbacks are used, they should not exceed 10 feet or 25% of the street frontage.

5. **Courtyards**

   - Courtyard arrangements are allowed. However, 50% of the street frontage must consist of building facades.

6. **Rear Setbacks**

   - There will be no requirement for rear setbacks, other than that required by the zoning ordinance. The rear of the lot is the preferred location for parking and private on-site open spaces.

D. Building Height

- No new building or addition should exceed 3 stories or 36 feet in height.

- Primary buildings should not be less than 2 stories in height.

A Note on Rowhouses and Townhouses

Rowhouses *are single-family homes on individual lots, much like the detached single-family homes that are dominant throughout Fresno. The primary differences are:*

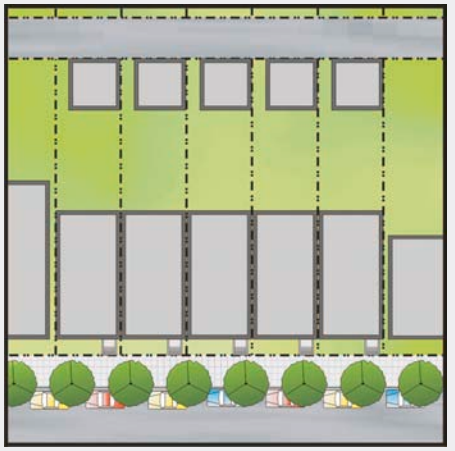
- *Rowhouses are built out completely to the side lot lines, so that they stand shoulder-to-shoulder with little or no space in between. This requires each rowhouse to have heavy masonry side firewalls.*
- *They are usually closer to the sidewalk than detached houses, with front yards ranging from 10 feet deep to no front yard at all.*
- *Rowhouses are typically 18 to 25 feet wide, and are typically at least 2 stories tall.*
- *The ground floor is usually elevated 3 to 5 feet above the sidewalk grade to ensure privacy, and the main entrance is accessed via a "stoop."*

Like regular single-family homes, each rowhouse is an independent structure on its own lot, and there are no commonly owned facilities or homeowners associations. Rather, the ownership of each home is fee simple, like standard houses.

Townhouses *are similar, except multiple units are located in one building on one lot, divided by party walls. While individual units may be separately owned through a condominium arrangement, the structure and other facilities are held in common by a homeowners' association. Other times, a single person will retain ownership of the entire complex and rent out the individual units as apartments. Unlike apartment houses, however, each unit in a townhouse development has its own outdoor entrance, and units are not "stacked" vertically.*

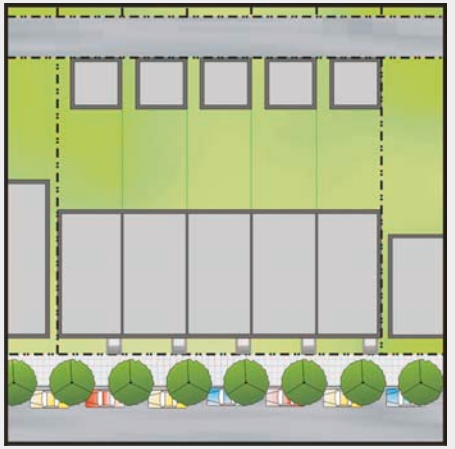
The drawings at the far right illustrate the differences between rowhouses and townhouses. Above are 5 rowhouses. Each is independently owned, is an independent structure, and occupies its own lot. The townhouses, below, are multiple units in a single building on a single lot. Otherwise, the two housing types are very similar.

Victorian rowhouses in San Francisco



Sample rowhouse site plan

Colonial townhouses in Celebration, FL



Sample townhouse site plan

E. Parking/Vehicular Access

1. Surface Parking Lot Design

- The rear of the lot is the preferred location for surface parking.
- Surface parking lots adjacent to a street should only be approved if site conditions make it impossible to locate the parking behind the building. Under no circumstances should a parking lot be located between a building and the street for new construction.
- In no case should surface parking occupy more than 50% of a lot.
- Handicapped and bicycle parking should be provided for per current City standards.
- When a parking lot must be located adjacent to a street, a clearly marked pedestrian walkway must be provided from the sidewalk to the entrance of the building.
- When a parking lot must be located adjacent to a street, it should be buffered from the street with a screening wall or fence 3 to 4 feet in height in order to enclose the parking lot. Screening walls or fencing must be attractively designed and must use complementary (or the same) materials used for the building or materials that are specific to the area.
- Screening walls should be located 2 to 3 feet back from the sidewalk to allow adequate room for landscape materials. In addition, greenery/vegetation on or through the wall or fence is encouraged.
- Screening walls must have one pedestrian access point for every 50 feet of street frontage.

2. Parking Structure/Underground Parking Design

- Parking structures and underground parking areas are permitted and encouraged in the Medium-High Density Residential Areas.

THIS

The parking lot for this apartment house is behind the main structure, accessed by a driveway along the side of the building. This is the preferred placement for multi-family parking.

NOT THIS

The parking lot for this apartment complex is in front of the main structure. This arrangement is never appropriate.

- Parking structures visible from the street must be as architecturally indistinguishable from the primary building as possible.

- Parking structures adjacent to the street must follow all guidelines set forth in this document for primary structures.

- Underground parking should not be visible from the street. Buildings suspended over parking areas by stilts should not be permitted

3. Proper Location and Treatment of Vehicular Access

- Automobile curb cuts across the sidewalk should be kept to an absolute minimum. They endanger and inconvenience pedestrians, especially those in wheelchairs. When possible, curb cuts should serve more than one site.

- For lots with alley access, no curb cuts will be granted from a street under any circumstances. Access must be taken from the alley.

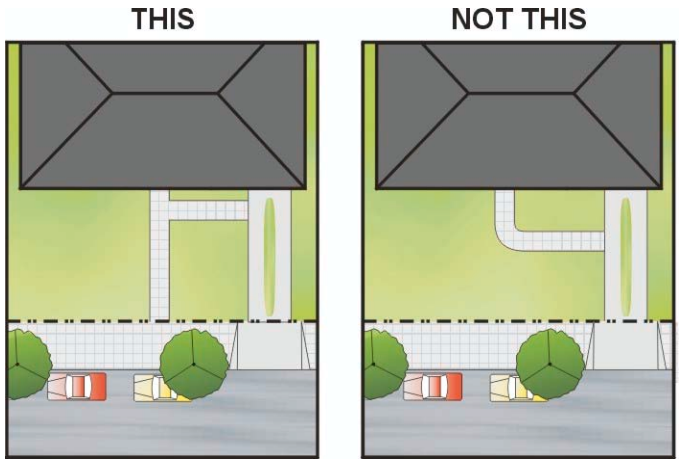
- For corner lots without alley access, access should be taken from the lowest classified street on which the lot fronts. For example, a parking lot for a building located on the corner of Olive and Lucerne will be granted access from Lucerne only.

- For interior lots without alley access, an attempt must be made to share side street access with a neighboring property through an easement. If this is not possible, then an attempt must be made to share a curb cut with a neighboring interior lot. If this is not possible, access will be permitted from the Main Street.

- If a lot with non-conforming curb cuts is redeveloped or significantly altered, access must be made to conform to these guidelines, and all unnecessary curb cuts must be removed and the sidewalk restored.

F. Pedestrian Access

- Pedestrian access from the street should be via a separate paved path the leads to the door directly from the sidewalk. The path should not begin at the driveway or any other point.



Pedestrian Access. *A direct path from the sidewalk to the front door of the house or apartment building should always be provided.*

G. On-Site Open Space

- For sites that have residential uses, provisions should be made for some sort of semi-private open space.

- These areas should be sizable enough to be functional, but need not be excessively large, and shouldn't occupy a larger portion of the lot than the structures.

- These open spaces should be clearly separated from the street and should be located at the rear of the lot behind the primary building or at the center of the lot in the form of a courtyard.

- This open space may take the form of play areas, decks, patios, or gardens. An alternative to ground level open spaces should be rooftop spaces.

H. Façade Elements

1. Architectural Design

It is not the intention of this document to regulate the architectural style of individual buildings. Creativity and diversity are encouraged. However, good architecture is critical to the creation of a beloved neighborhood, and the following guidelines should apply:

- New buildings should make every attempt to fit in to their surroundings. This does not mean that the existing buildings must be copied, but the context of any new building must be respected. Attempts should be made to ties the building into its neighbors through the use of similar massing, materials, or some other technique.

- Renovations of, and additions to, historic buildings must follow the original style. Victorian gingerbread should not be added to an art deco building, nor should a classical structure be remodeled to be modernistic.

- Materials used in renovations of, and additions to, historic buildings should be consistent with the original materials. For example, stucco should not be used in place of the clapboard siding on a Craftsman.

- New buildings that mimic historical styles are acceptable and welcome, but they must be accurate interpretations. A well-done modern building in a traditional style is very pleasing, but a poorly done imitation of a historical home is quite unpleasant and looks cartoonish and fake. Special attention must be paid to materials, proportions, and ornamentation originally used in the proposed style.

2. Doors

- For rowhouses and townhouses, each unit must have a primary entrance that faces, and is parallel to, the street.

- For standard apartment houses, all apartments must be accessed through an entrance that faces, and is parallel to, the street. This may be a centralized entrance that is used for multiple units, or each individual unit may have its own exterior entrance. Secondary entrances that do not face a street will be allowed, but not in-lieu of a street-facing entrance.

- For courtyard apartment buildings, some apartments may open onto the courtyard, but only if the courtyard and the entrance are visible and accessible from the street. In addition, the doors of the units adjacent to the street must open on to the street and must be parallel to the street.

3. Windows

- Windows must be provided along all walls that face a street.

- At least 15%, but not more than 25% of the wall area must consist of windows.

- Windows should maintain the same style and spacing along all sides of building.

- Windows should be vertically oriented, or taller than they are wide. Also, each window should be individually articulated and should not form long horizontal or vertical bands.

- Windows should not be flush with solid building surfaces, but rather should be recessed at least 4 inches from the exterior wall plane.

- Windows should be single-hung, double-hung, casement style, or other styles common to the area. Horizontal aluminum sliders and non-opening windows are strictly prohibited.

- Whenever possible, upper-floor windows at the rear and sides of buildings should be placed to maximize the privacy of the neighboring properties.

4. Rooflines

- The roof forms of buildings in the Medium-High Residential Area should be more varied and residential in character than in the "main street" area. Flat roofs are appropriate, but other approaches, such as gabled roofs, hipped roofs, and mansard roofs with attic dormers should be used.

- Modifications or additions to historical buildings should maintain the original roof type.

5. External Stairways

- For stairways used to access upper-floors, internal enclosed stairways are preferred.

- When exterior stairways are used, they should be constructed directly adjacent to the structure behind a partial wall or fin that

Façade Elements. *This Tower District apartment house shows good use of balconies, porches, stoops, cornices, and internal stairways.*

External Stairways. *This Tower District apartment shows appropriate treatment of external stairways by using materials consistent with the building.*

hides the stairs and railing. The partial wall must be consistent with the materials of the building.

- External stairways should be located on the side or on the rear of the building.

6. Balconies

- Balconies are allowed and encouraged. However, they must be attractive and architecturally incorporated into the building. Balconies that appear to be afterthoughts will be strongly discouraged.

7. Porches

- Porches are allowed and encouraged. However, they must be attractive and appear to be architecturally incorporated into the building. Porches that appear to be afterthoughts will be strongly discouraged.

- Porches should be at least 6 feet deep.

8. Stoops

- Stoops are encouraged, especially for rowhouses and townhouses.

10. Façade Articulation

- Facades may be more articulated and residential in character or flatter and more urban in character. On already built-up blocks, the existing pattern should be respected. On new blocks, buildings closer to the street should be less articulated, and buildings further from the street may be more articulated. However, buildings in the Medium-High Density Residential Area should be generally calmer than their wildly articulated suburban counterparts.

Stoops. *Stoops are most appropriate for rowhouses and townhouses, but can also be used for apartment houses.*

I. Signs

- Signs announcing the name of an apartment building must be no greater than 25 square feet in area and must be attached to the façade, parallel to the façade, above the main entrance to the building.

- Signs for commercial uses may have 1 square feet of area for each foot of street frontage, up to a maximum of 50 square feet. Signs must be attached to the façade, parallel to the façade, above the main entrance to the building.

- Temporary signage, such as signage for home sales, garage sales, and political signage, etc., should not be displayed for any length of time greater than is necessary.

J. Accessory Buildings

- Accessory buildings must be located behind the main building. If visible from the street, accessory buildings must architecturally resemble the primary building.

K. Mechanical Equipment

- Heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) units should be located on the ground, either in the back or on the side of the residence. Units placed on the ground should be screened with landscaping. When rooftop placement is necessary, the unit should be located on the side or rear of the residence, so as to limit street visibility.

L. Lighting

- Lighting fixtures should complement the architectural style of the primary structure. Industrial style lighting, such as flood lighting or fluorescent lighting, is prohibited.

- Lighting, other than parking lot lighting, should be permanently fixed to the structure.

V. Medium Density Residential Area Guidelines

The bulk of the land in the Tower District is occupied by medium density residential uses. These areas are characterized by a dominance of single-family homes, although small-scaled apartment houses often commingle nicely among the houses. Architecture is varied and ornate, and often historic in nature. Most activity in these areas will be remodeling or additions, although some replacements or infilling will take place occasionally.

Single Family Homes. *Typical Tower District single-family residences.*

4-Plex. *Small scale "4-plex" in a single-family Tower District neighborhood.*

A. Uses

1. Uses Encouraged

a. Single-family detached houses

b. Duplexes

c. Apartment houses, 4 units maximum (4-plexs).

2. Uses Discouraged

a. Commercial uses

b. Industrial uses

c. Large multi-family buildings

B. Lot Size

1. Width

- On average, lots should be 35 to 60 feet in width, and no larger than 100 feet in width.

2. Depth

- On average, lots should be 100 to 150 feet in depth. Except in the instances of unusually narrow blocks, lots should not extend

the entire depth of the block, fronting on 2 streets. Rather, lots should extend to mid-block.

3. Area

- Lots should not exceed 0.5 acres in size.

C. Building Placement

1. Front Yard Setbacks

- In general, single-family front setbacks vary in the Tower District. They range from as little as 5 feet to as much as 40. On built-up blocks, setbacks should be consistent with the established pattern of adjacent properties, as illustrated at right. On new blocks, or blocks with no clear pattern, front setbacks of 10 to 20 feet are most appropriate.

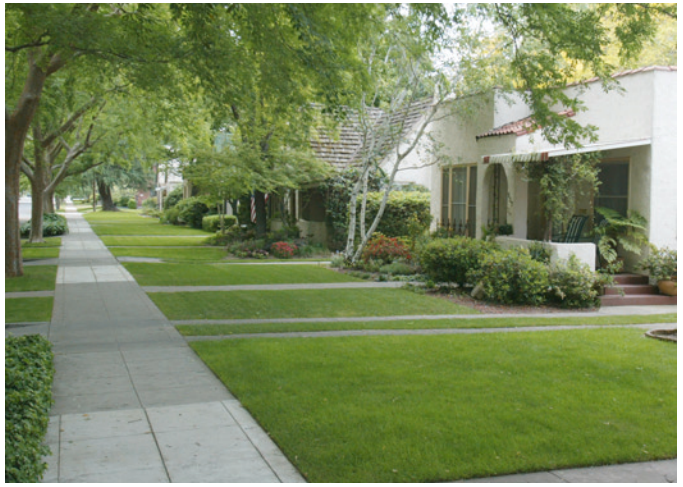
2. Building Orientation

- Buildings should not be angled in plan relative to the adjacent street right-of-way. Facades should be parallel to rights-of-way.

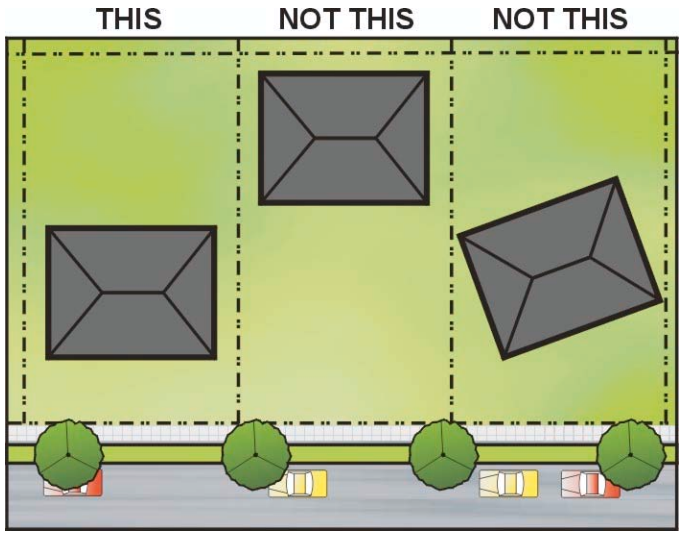
3. Side and Rear Yard Setbacks

- In general, side and rear setbacks should be consistent with adjacent properties. On new blocks, or blocks with no established pattern, side and rear setbacks of 3 to 6 feet are most appropriate.

- In some instances, side setback requirements may present difficulties. For example, narrow lots without alley access may require that the home be constructed within one of the side setbacks in order to allow adequate room on the other side for a driveway that leads to a detached garage. In these instances the DRC would be supportive of a variance from this requirement. If a structure is built within the minimum required setback requirement, a firewall may be required per City building codes.



Uniform Setbacks. *This Tower District Street of uniform front yard setbacks creates a very pleasant place to live. These patterns should be preserved and maintained.*



Front Setbacks and Building Orientation. *Homes should be set back 20 to 30 feet from the street, and should be oriented parallel to the street, rather than at an angle.*

D. Building Size

1. Height

- In general, buildings should not grossly exceed the height of their neighbors. In the Tower District this ranges from 1 to 2 stories. Specific height requirements vary from zone to zone and specific requirements for individual parcels should be described in the zoning ordinance.

2. Width

- In general, building widths should be consistent with adjacent properties. On new blocks, or blocks with no established pattern, building widths of 30 to 50 feet are most appropriate.

E. Parking/Vehicular Access

1. Garages

- Garages should be detached from the house and placed at the rear of the lot so that street visibility is limited.

- In instances where a detached garage is not possible or practical, attached placement may be considered. Attached garages must complement the house as much as possible. Attached garages should be set back 10 to 20 feet behind the face of the main structure. Under no circumstances should the garage be placed closer to the street than the residence.

- Garages should carry on the same architectural style of the residence. Design elements such as roof pitch, building materials, attic vents and windows should always match that of the residence.

THIS

Detached Garage Behind The House. *The place where the car lives should not visually dominate the place where the people live. Streets lined with homes like this one are pleasing and popular.*

NOT THIS

The Snout House. *This garage dominates the façade of the house. To a pedestrian, this street looks more like a warehouse district than a neighborhood. The Tower District would not be a special place if homes like this were allowed to proliferate.*

2. Carports

- Carports should adhere to the same structural and architectural guidelines as detailed above for garages. Carports, however, need not be set back from the front of the house. When carports are constructed, architectural features of the residence, roofline, columns, attic vents, etc., should be incorporated into the carport.

- Temporary carports, consisting of canvas or steel pipe, etc., are inappropriate.

Carports. *Architecturally, these carports appear to be an extension to the residence since the columns and roofing materials of the main residence are consistent in the carport.*

3. Proper Location and Treatment of Vehicular Access

- If alley access is available, then vehicular access should be taken from the alley.

- If no alley is available, then access will be allowed via a curb cut and driveway. For corner lots, this access should be taken from the lowest classified street or the street that is clearly less significant.

- For lots with access from a street, ribbon driveways ("Hollywood Drives") are preferred over solid concrete driveways. This is illustrated in the photo to the right. Ribbon driveways soften the overall street visibility of the residence. As shown, the typical and preferred ribbon driveway consists of two concrete strips and lawn in the center. However, other natural materials, such as brick or river rock may be used in place of the center grass strip.

- The width of the drive approach and driveway should be no greater than 16 feet. When a two-car garage is proposed, in the case of an exceptionally wide lot or from a side street, landscape materials are encouraged to soften the increased amount of cement. A dual ribbon driveway or landscaping in the middle of the two drives would be appropriate.

Ribbon Driveway. *Preferred ribbon driveway design with lawn treatment.*

Ribbon Driveway With Alternative Materials. *This photo shows good use of acceptable alternative materials for ribbon driveways.*

Landscape Treatment for 2 Car Garage. *This corner lot, 2 car garage, appropriately uses landscaping to soften the* driveway.

F. Pedestrian Access

- Pedestrian access from the street should be taken from a separate paved path the leads to the door directly from the sidewalk. The path should not begin at the driveway or any other point.

Pedestrian Access. *Paths should be provided to the main entry of the house directly from the sidewalk.*

G. Façade Elements

1. Architectural Design

It is not the intention of this document to regulate the architectural style of individual buildings. Creativity and diversity are encouraged. However, good architecture is critical to the creation of a beloved neighborhood, and the following guidelines should apply:

- New buildings should make every attempt to fit in to their surroundings. This does not mean that the existing buildings must be copied, but that the context of any new building must be respected. Attempts should be made to tie the building into its neighbors through the use of similar massing, materials, roof type, architectural style, or some other technique.

- Renovations of, and additions to, historic buildings must follow the original style. Victorian gingerbread should not be added to an art deco building, nor should a classical structure be remodeled to be modernistic.

- Materials used in renovations of, and additions to, historic buildings should be consistent with the original materials. For example, stucco should not be used in place of the clapboard siding on a Craftsman.

- New buildings that mimic historical styles are acceptable and welcome, but they must be accurate interpretations. A well-done modern building in a traditional style is very pleasing, but a poorly done imitation of a historical home is quite unpleasant and looks cartoonish and fake. Special attention must be paid to materials, proportions, and ornamentation originally used in the

New Building. *This recently constructed residence does an excellent job of fitting into the neighborhood.*

Roof Forms. *The steep pitch and crossed gables of this Tudor home is a key component to its architecture. Additions to this type of residence must maintain the same roofline.*

proposed style.

2. Doors

- Each building must be accessed through a primary entrance that faces, and is parallel to, the street.
- Replacement doors should be of the same type as the original, or fit with the architectural style of the residence. Metal security doors are not appropriate for the Tower District.

3. Windows

- Windows must be provided along all walls that face a street.
- At least 15%, but not more than 25% of each street-facing facade should consist of windows.
- Windows should be vertically oriented, i.e., taller than they are wide. Also, each window should be individually articulated and should not form long horizontal or vertical bands. In some styles, such as the Craftsman, windows were grouped, and this is an appropriate technique to use. However, framing at least 4 inches in width must separate individual windows in a group, and no group may have a width greater than 1.5 times the height of the group.
- Windows should not be flush with solid building surfaces, but rather recessed at least 4 inches from the exterior wall plane.
- Windows should be single-hung sash, double-hung sash, casement style, or other similar types. Horizontally sliding windows and non-opening windows are inappropriate.
- For the replacement of windows on existing structures, replacement windows should look as similar to the original window as possible in order not to disrupt the residence's architectural design.
- Windows may include glazing bars, or muntins. The addition of

Screen Doors. *Unlike a metal security door, this screen door is appropriate for this single family residence.*

Replacement Windows. *These new windows are double - hung vinyl-framed windows, which are a suitable replacement for the double-hung wood-framed windows that were originally on this house.*

glazing bars can break up the house's facade and add texture to the building. On historical homes, the original muntin and pane pattern should be maintained when windows are replaced.

- Vinyl or wood window frames are preferred, whereas metal window frames are discouraged.

- Whenever possible, upper-floor windows at the rear and sides of buildings should be placed to maximize the privacy of the neighboring properties.

- Replacement windows should maintain the same size and be in the same location as the original windows. The number, size, style and shape of window panels should be consistent with the original windows.

- Where applicable, the existing original trim should remain intact when replacement windows are installed.

Casement Windows. *If ever replaced, the pattern, size and shape of these casement style windows, should be maintained.*

4. Roofs

- Generally, roofs should be pitched and not flat. Common roof types in the Tower District single-family home areas are gabled, hipped, and gambrel roofs.

- For additions or renovations, the roof type, pitch, and color should be consistent with that of the original structure.

- For new buildings that mimic historical styles, the roof type must be appropriate to the proposed architectural style.

- For additions or renovations of existing structures, roofing materials used should generally match the original roofing materials, particularly when the original material is tile, slate, or tin. In the case of wood shake roof replacement, use of composite materials is allowed and encouraged.

Roof Type. *This tile roof is appropriate for this Mediterranean-style house.*

Common Architectural Features of Tower District Homes

	Style	Cladding Materials	Roofing Materials	Other Features
	**Neo-Classical** *Including Colonial Revival, Italianate, etc.*	Brick, clapboard, smooth stucco	Wood shingles, composite shingles, sometimes ribbed tin.	Pedimented doors and gables, classical columns, porticos, ornamented cornices, balustrades,
	**Mediterranean** *Including Spanish Colonial, Monterey, Mission Revival, etc.*	Smooth stucco.	Red ceramic tile of various types—straight barrel mission tile, tapered mission tile, Spanish tile, or American Spanish tile.	Quatrefoil windows, shaped parapets, arched entry porches.
	**Tudor**	Usually smooth stucco, sometimes brick or stone.	Wood shingles, slate shingles, composite shingles as a replacement.	Half-timbering, multiple front gables, multi-level eaves, rounded entryways.
	**Craftsman**	Usually clapboard, sometimes split wood shingles or stone.	Wood shingles, composite shingles.	Eaves decorated with exposed rafter tails and cutout brackets, large porches with tapered piers, low- pitched roofs.
	**Prairie**	Stucco, clapboard.	Clay tiles, wood shingles, composite shingles as a replacement.	Wide eave overhangs that are boxed without brackets, low pitched roofs, geometric patterns of small pane window glazing, tall casement windows.

This list is not meant to be exhaustive, nor will it be the sole determining factor in the review of projects. It is merely intended to give readers an idea of the styles of architecture present in the area.

5. Cladding Materials

- For renovations and additions to existing buildings, siding materials should always match the original materials. In new construction, materials should be comparable to those in the neighborhood and should be appropriate to the selected architectural style of the house (i.e., stucco shouldn't be used for a Victorian, and fish-scale shingles shouldn't be used on a Mediterranean).

- For new buildings that mimic historical styles, the cladding materials must be appropriate to the proposed architectural style.

- For historic structures with horizontal lap (clapboard) siding, every effort should be made to maintain the original materials; however, if new horizontal 6" or 8" siding is proposed, it should match the width and style of the original or that which is typical to the period. When new siding is installed, the original trim of the windows and vents should be left intact.

- Approved siding materials are as follows:

  a. Bevel or Bungalow

  b. Dolly Varden

  c. Drop siding

  d. Tongue and groove

  e. Channel Rustic

- Sidings which are **expressly prohibited** in the Tower District are as follows:

  a. All Vertical Siding (except board on bat and board on board)

  b. Rough sawn plain

  c. T1-11, in any form.

d. Kerfed Rough Sawn

e. Reverse Board and Batten

f. Metal siding of all types and design

- Stucco is appropriate for historical homes and new homes that mimic historical styles only when stucco was the original cladding material used for that style. In cases where stucco is appropriate, the method of application must match that originally used for such homes. Generally, modern stucco applications that are highly textured, such as spatter dash, are inappropriate on historic styles such as Mediterranean and Tudor, which used a smoother troweled finish.

Appropriate Stucco. *This unique stucco application is appropriate for this early ranch house. However, it would be inappropriate on a Craftsman style home.*

6. Security

- Security doors and security window bars are inappropriate for the Tower District. Both detract from the architectural beauty of the neighborhood and create the false impression that the area is crime-ridden and dangerous.

- Alarm boxes for home security system should be placed in an inconspicuous location to limit street visibility.

7. Attic Vents

- Architecturally, the attic vent is an important element in the various styles in the Tower District. The attic vent should be consistent with those in the neighborhood and relative to the style of the residence.

- Similar attic vents should be carried through to any auxiliary structure on the lot, i.e., garages, carports, mother-in-law units, storage sheds, etc.

Attic Vents. *Common attic vent types in the Tower District.*

8. Balconies

- Balconies are allowed and encouraged. However, they must be attractive and incorporated architecturally into the building. Balconies that appear to be afterthoughts will be strongly discouraged.

9. Porches

- Porches are allowed and encouraged. However, they must be attractive and incorporated architecturally into the building. Porches that appear to be afterthoughts will be strongly discouraged.

- Porches should be at least 6 feet deep.

10. Façade Articulation

- Facades should be more articulated and residential in character. However, even when facades of new buildings are strongly articulated, architects should use restraint in the design of the home. The contemporary trend of the "McMansion," with dozens of wild gables, roof pitches, dormers, and out-of-proportion Palladian windows should be avoided in favor of more subtle approaches that blend with the more sublime historical architecture of the neighborhood.

THIS

Historic Home. *Calm, controlled, and beautiful.*

NOT THIS

McMansion. *Attractive, but too busy. Historical elements are not correctly applied.*

H. Fencing

1. Front yard fencing

Front yard fencing is discouraged in the Tower District. It creates a "fortress" mentality and an unwelcoming streetscape. The traditional pattern in the area is to have open, unfenced front yards lining the street, and this historical pattern should be preserved. Generally, no fencing should encroach beyond the plane of the front façade of the primary house. However, when front yard fencing is proposed in zone districts where front yard fences are allowed, and an owner cannot be dissuaded from constructing one despite the drawbacks, the following guidelines should apply:

- Front yard fences should not abut the sidewalk. The fence should be setback from the sidewalk at least 2 to 3 feet to allow room for landscape materials to soften the fence and to ensure pedestrian comfort.

- Fences constructed of brick, cement block, contiguous wood pickets, or other opaque methods may be no taller than 3 feet in height.

- Fences constructed of wrought iron, spaced wood pickets, or other methods that allow visibility into the front yard may be no taller than 4 feet in height.

- Chain link fencing in the front yard is never appropriate.

2. Side and rear yard fencing

- Side and rear yard fencing, placed outside of the required setback area, is allowable by right up to 6 feet in height. Any proposed side or rear yard fence greater than 6 feet requires a Variance through the City of Fresno and should generally be discouraged by the DRC. Fencing materials should be consistent and complementary to the residence. Brick, wood or wrought iron are the preferred materials.

- The use of chain link or similar materials is strongly discouraged.

Front Yard Fence. *These front yard fences exemplify good use of materials and height.*

Rear Yard Fence. *This corner lot rear yard fence is tastefully done to complement the residence. Notice the use of the landscaping along the sidewalk side of the fence and how it softens the appearance.*

However, in the event that chain link is proposed, efforts should be made to screen the chain link with wood slats or landscaping. These screening measures will reduce the visual impact of the chain link fence.

- As shown in the photo to the right, efforts should be made to limit the encroachment of side yard fencing into the front yard when there is no front yard fence in place. Such placement of side yard fencing serves no purpose and disrupts the continuity of the neighborhood's front yard setback.

I. Signs

- There should be no signs in the medium density residential areas.

J. Accessory Buildings

- Accessory buildings such as storage sheds or second dwelling units should be located to the rear of the property so that street visibility is limited.

- Accessory buildings should carry on the same architectural style as that of the primary residence. Design elements such as roof pitch, building materials, attic vents and windows should always match that of the primary residence.

K. Mechanical Equipment

- Heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) units should be located on the ground, either in the back or on the side of the residence. Units placed on the ground should be screened with landscaping. When rooftop placement is necessary, the unit should be located on the side or rear of the residence, in order to limit street visibility.

Side Yard Fence. *This side yard fence disrupts the continuity of the neighborhood front yard setback and is discouraged.*

Hidden Equipment. *This residence's HVAC unit is located so it is not visible from the street.*

L. Lighting

- Lighting fixtures should complement the architectural style of the primary structure. Industrial style lighting, such as flood lighting or fluorescent lighting, is prohibited.

- Lighting should be permanently fixed to the structure.